# THE NEW REPUBLIC

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## Is This What We Waited For?

Though we hope for the best in the Balkans and North Africa, it is well, in view of past wishful thinking, to be prepared for the worst. Germany's advances have been lightning-swift, well planned and powerfully supported. For all their bravery, Yugoslavia and Greece may soon share the fate of many other freedom-loving European nations. The German African force may even penetrate to Alexandria and threaten Suez.

This prospect should make us do something more than wring our hands. Much could have been done to avert it if we had been ready. But we wasted precious months overcoming the reluctance of manufacturers to take risks for defense production and to expand their plants. We wasted weeks passing the lease-lend bill. We have not yet put into general practice the much needed farming out of defense contracts, or mass production of ships. It has been said that only another disaster for the Allies would jolt us out of our jog trot. We might avoid the loss of a few more precious weeks if we could muster imagination and energy enough to respond to the shadow of disaster. If, fortunately, it does not arrive, we shall be luckier than we deserve.

## Greenland and the Red Sea

In his address of last week Mr. Churchill chose to emphasize that the problem of supplies is still England's greatest worry. When he balanced military events in the Balkans and the Near East against the Battle of the Atlantic, he found the latter the weightier. Similarly, President Roosevelt's recent decisions, to include Greenland in our sphere of protection and to open the Red Sea to our shipping, are principally signs of our own determination to put the supply problem first. Greenland, as a friendly base for British shipping plying between Halifax and home ports, has now the makings of a steppingstone on the Atlantic route, which might be important to aid naval and aerial convoying and the flying of fighter planes to Britain. The waters separating it from our ports are now theoretically friendly to British shipping; the Nazis will make them hostile only at the risk of a clash with the United States. The opening of the Red Sea is a similar defiance of Hitler with much the same end in view. The supplying of the British war front in Africa will be partially assumed by us and Hitler will hunt our ships only at grave risk to his own cause. Equally important will be the release of British merchant tonnage for service in the Atlantic.

## The Safety of Convoys

The action regarding Greenland was no more than one example of the administration's efforts to ensure the passage of Atlantic supplies. It was reported that the United States had offered military shipments to

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Eire in return for use by the British of southern Irish ports. Ten Coast Guard cutters were turned over to the Royal Navy for convoy work. Most interesting of all was the report that experiments were in progress regarding the conversion of standard cargo boats into plane carriers. A merchantman of 7,886 tons was admitted by the navy to be under reconstruction at Newport News, where she was being fitted with a flight deck and other accessories essential to a carrier. Such a ship, it was said, would carry some thirty fighters, and accompany convoys, using her planes against German bombers and in the detection of submarines. Reconstruction was said to take no more than forty-five days, and it was rumored that sixteen to thirty vessels of a standard type might be so adapted. The scheme, at first hearing, sounds feasible and most encouraging, especially if the period of reconstruction is as brief as it is stated to be. For speed is the essential factor in the Battle of the Atlantic; with shipping losses for the last week in March reaching nearly 80,000 tons, the utmost ingenuity and industrial effort will be required before any turn for the better can be expected.

## Ford Is Still Ford

The settlement of the Ford strike is an important event, but it was not the overwhelming union victory that some of the newspaper headlines suggested. It is true that Ford entered an agreement with a union, the CIO-UAW, for the first time in his history, and this may be marked as a milestone of a sort. It is also true that the motor magnate consented to a "court of appeals" for grievance committees which includes some "outsiders"—among them Governor Van Wagoner of Michigan, Allan Haywood of the national CIO office and President Thomas of the UAW. Ford himself, however, won an important victory. He stipulated that the NLRB hearings on his previous attitude should be postponed until after the NLRB election in his plants. These hearings, with their revelations of numerous acts of brutality against union organizers, would certainly have had a powerful influence on the election, of a sort Ford does not want. On the whole, it looks as though daylight were breaking at last on the darkest sector of the American industrial scene; but this is due to cooler heads in Mr. Ford's entourage than his own. The aging automobile king remains as bitterly anti-labor as ever.

## Leon Henderson's Job

The appointment of Mr. Leon Henderson as Price Administrator—an office he has in effect been holding for some time—is of value because of the stress it lays on the problem at a time when prices of numerous critical commodities have begun to shoot up rapidly. The President gives him power to employ mandatory price fixing wherever necessary. This club he hopes he will not have to use, except in isolated instances, and so far his persuasion has been remarkably effective.

Both the President's letter of appointment and Mr. Henderson himself point out that the most important means of avoiding skyrocketing prices is to see that supplies of goods in demand are ample. The Price Administrator is supposed to make sure that they are. But in order to do so all along the line he will have to have the coöperation of other governmental agencies —in particular the OPM. There it is that the dollar-a-year men have obstructed expansion of capacity in crucial materials like steel. We shall be interested to see whether Mr. Henderson will make the policy of plenty work better than it did in the hands of the industrial magnates in charge of defense production.

## Steel Wages and Prices

One ticklish problem facing the price administration is the insistence of employers that wherever wage increases occur, prices must be raised by a like amount. That would in the end rob the wage-earners of any gain and do much to disturb the efforts to stabilize prices, even though it does not threaten inflation.

The question is particularly urgent now because of the 10-cents-per-hour wage advance won by the steel workers. It is far from certain that this advance cannot be absorbed without boosting prices. On the basis of figures of the Bureau of Labor Statistics, it has been calculated that production per man-hour in the steel industry has increased 17 percent between the first half of 1937 and the last half of 1940. This calculation takes into account the changes in the composition of the steel output in that period. When each man, working one hour, has been able to produce more steel, labor costs must have gone down. Another calculation indicates that this is true; since early 1939 the wages paid per dollar of steel shipped have declined markedly.

If, as is probable, the output of the industry continues in 1941 at least as large as in the fourth quarter of 1940, profits would be 11 or 12 percent on the capital stock and surplus of the industry, without any wage increase. A wage increase of 10 percent, without any price boost, would reduce these profits only to 9 percent—a figure higher than for any year since the bottom of the depression.

## French Blockade

Mr. Churchill has replied to Marshal Pétain's recent declaration of non-hostility to England with cordiality for the words and sternness toward the French actions which belie them. He has announced that the blockade of France will be tightened, not necessarily in the matter of foodstuffs, but in all materials which might aid the German war machine. He gives as his reasons the fact that in the past year tons of rubber and other raw materials have passed from North Africa to German factories, and the possibility that the French might try to send their warships from Africa to ports accessible to the Germans in France. No one will doubt

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that Mr. Churchill could have cited additional examples of unneutral French conduct. No one is better able than he to see how the situation has changed since the fall of France. The hope of a truly independent French Africa has dwindled, and with it the chance that the Vichy government might have the power to bargain with Hitler. The French colonies in Africa have become far more of a worry to England than anyone thought possible six months ago; they are strategically situated both on the Mediterranean and the Atlantic and have German military commissions in high places. It is even rumored that the present German advance into Egypt has been assisted with supplies, including oil, from French Tunisia. With Suez threatened in the eastern Mediterranean and Gibraltar in risk of encirclement at the western end, Mr. Churchill's firmness is not surprising.

## Counter-Offensive

These addresses that Vice President Wallace is making are becoming more and more important. There is no theatre in Mr. Wallace's speaking voice but there is thought behind his words and you hear many people discussing what he has said. In his talk last week before the Foreign Policy Association in New York City, he said quietly that the country was in danger, pointing out that the Nazis start warfare against a nation long before the tanks, planes and submarines get into action, and that we would be foolish not to realize that we have for several years been the object of fierce German attacks. He called for a counter-offensive against this attempt to paralyze the will of those of us who, in Hitler's words to Rauschning, suffer from "the burden of liberty."

Mr. Wallace would seek internal order, not by force, but by the conscious acceptance by citizens of a Bill of Duties, corollary to a Bill of Rights. His was the plainest talking that has been heard yet about peace aims and post-war organization: "The battle of the peace is far more than protecting the fine people of Germany from their heritage of deceitful Prussian statecraft. There must be worked out an international order sufficiently strong to prevent the rise of aggressor nations." And he emphasized that "The next peace must take into account the facts of economics." He countered Hitler's new world built on hatred by proposing a democratic world built on the idea of brotherhood. Mr. Wallace means this word brotherhood. He couples it with the ever-normal-granary program or analyses of South American trade problems, in the sincere belief that the two naturally go together. Mr. Wallace speaks for democracy well and persuasively.

## Generalization

At Winston-Salem, North Carolina, Mr. Wallace spoke less to the point, saying, "The public cannot hold guiltless those who seize the current situation to settle ancient regional, personal and jurisdictional grudges." Generalizations about strikes, in so far as strikes were what he was referring to, are not helpful. Does the Vice President mean to hold guilty the Bethlehem strikers, for example, because they had a grudge? They certainly have a grudge, but they were in fact trying to correct ancient law-breaking by the Bethlehem Steel Corporation, and it is in the public interest that they should do so. The general idea that any strike is sabotage by workers is what letter writers to the editor of The New York Herald Tribune are working furiously to fix in the public mind. The truth lies in careful distinctions. Anyone charging sabotage should name names.

## The Land Needs Friends

Despite all the talk about conservation in recent years, most Americans still seem to be bored by the subject. Although a great part of this country will be turned into an uninhabitable desert in about a century, unless we learn to take better care of our soil than we are doing at present, few people seem to care. Congress refuses to appropriate the four billion dollars that would solve the whole question once and for all. A new organization has been created to try to wake Americans up and also to serve as a meeting place for those who welcome agrarianism as a way of life. It is called the Friends of the Land, and it is publishing a quarterly journal called simply The Land. Under the wise and able editorship of Russell Lord, the first issue, which has just appeared, is a fine job of vivid writing on a theme which for some reason inspires most people to be dull. We wish for the organization and its periodical a long and successful life, for the country's sake as well as its own.

## What Sort of Home Guard?

Washington, so we hear, is working out plans for Home Guards to protect the country in the possible absence of the regular army and the National Guard. It is no doubt true that some sort of additional volunteer force is desirable; Tom Wintringham's volunteer defenders in England have had an excellent psychological effect and probably a good deal of military value as well. But we hope that any plans for this country will be very carefully drawn. The National Guard has been used in strikes in a way to alienate the sympathy of large numbers of people. The last thing the country wants is more of this, or a repetition of the Home Guards of the last war. The memory of them is searing. We hope Washington has not forgotten them, those dauntless middle-aged and seventeen-year-old warriors who carried their two-foot hickory clubs with them when they went out at night to post a letter, slaughtering a Hun at every step as they walked beneath the ferocious foliage of Maple Avenue to the mailbox on the corner of Main Street. Did he

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never see them drilling, such of them as were able to obtain uniforms and guns? The wounds which they inflicted on their wives', their parents' and their own self-esteem are too ghastly to contemplate even now. Fortunately they fired no bullets. Except in rare instances, no bullets were given them. What the Home Guards did do in 1917 and 1918, besides get in the way, was to help create the spirit of perfervid "Americanism" which resulted in vigilante action against labor and the post-war excesses of the American Legion. We hope nobody wants to whip up this spirit again; all sensible Americans are ashamed of it.

## Gloating Over Crime

Was a law passed when all of us were looking in another direction that makes it mandatory for policemen to yank criminals by the hair, when they have been captured, in order that newspaper photographers can get a Hollywood picture of the lawbreakers' faces in a "natural" pose—that is to say, registering pain? For some reason this bit of disgusting theatre has become a standard feature of the capture of criminals. It was displayed at its worst when the two murderers who escaped from Sing Sing prison were caught a few days ago. They had committed a vicious crime for which they should be punished. But the purpose of the punishment of criminals is to protect society against them, not to pull society down to their level. Police regulations properly require that full-face pictures of all criminals be taken for police records. The police should and do take them. But who is supposed to benefit from the press photograph? The police? The photographers? The city editors, who gloat over it in the caption they give it on the front page? Perhaps, but is American taste on the whole as degraded as that? We ask the privilege of doubting it and of remarking that some papers seem to get along well without it.

## Teachers on Democracy

Although some people don't seem to think so, teachers are people. They are entitled like everyone else to opinions; they have them, and often they are good ones. The American Federation of Teachers, for example, has recently issued a statement on the subject "Education, Democracy and Defense," which leaves no doubt where the leaders of this organization stand. The statement says that the history of Europe shows clearly that there is no hope for any group in the pattern of dictatorship. It believes that the democratic way must replace the psychology and the tactics of irreconcilable conflict. It says that democracy's hope lies in satisfying the needs of its own people and that the democratic way is the way of reason. The AFT wants teachers to convince their students of this and it suggests a carefully thought-out program of how they may go about doing so. It also suggests a program of adult education in democracy. May such classes be established soon in key places—Washington, for example.

## Whitaker on Mussolini

Among the most interesting stories to come out of the war are those of John T. Whitaker, the Chicago Daily News correspondent recently ejected from Italy. The burden of Whitaker's dispatches is that: (1) Hitler has seized control of Italy, not because he wanted to but for fear that Mussolini's collapse might otherwise result in a separate peace; (2) he has done this by inserting politely persuasive Nazis behind key positions in Italian government and industry, and by sending many thousand troops, 1,400 planes and 5 motorized divisions to Italy and Libya; (3) the Italians are bitter about defeats in a war for which they were militarily and psychologically unprepared, and they hate the Germans now more than ever; (4) Mussolini probably suffered a stroke early in 1939, and is now a violent paranoiac; (5) Mussolini blundered into the Greek campaign to "show" Hitler, who was felt to have been ungenerous with French spoils, and despite warnings that bribes to Greek generals had not been effective; (6) the Italian navy is short of fuel and trained officers, the army is riddled with Fascist party politics, the air force has had almost no replacements for the 1,600 out of 3,500 planes lost—1,300 in Libya, 200 in Albania, 100 over the English Channel; (7) between the British blockade and Nazi greediness for material and workmen, Italy finds her factories limping and her food supply inadequate. None of these theses is new, but the documentation certainly is the latest and probably the most authentic we have had from outside the wall of censorship.

## Australia Blazes a Road

Australia seems about to adopt the first general endowment plan for children. This thinly populated country is worried because it has 100,000 fewer children under fifteen than it had seven years ago. Under a bill introduced in the Australian House of Representatives, the government would pay every family five shillings a week for each child in excess of one. The money would be raised by a payroll tax, from the general fund and—what seems a particularly logical source—by not permitting the exemption to apply on the higher incomes. Australians hope to get the plan under way within a few months, both as the first step in a population-increase campaign and to ensure adequate feeding during the war.

## News Notes of a Week

In his Easter address the Pope asked countries at war to refrain from using still more horrible weapons of destruction. It was assumed that he was referring to the use of poison gas. . . . Vichy ordered the French frontier closed tightly because so many Frenchmen

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were trying to leave the country to fight beside de Gaulle. . . . Quisling, who has given the world a new synonym for the word traitor, announced that King Haakon of Norway is officially dethroned. The Nazis hope to settle down in this delightful country. Reports from Norway indicate that they are finding it most uncomfortable. . . . The RAF staged its biggest raid on Berlin.

John L. Lewis predicted a shortage of soft coal because of the refusal of Southern operators to come to agreement with the union. Charles O'Neill, spokesman for the Northern operators, was bitter about the bolting of the Appalachian conference by the Southern mine owners. "These men continue to make trouble for the industry and the country," he said. . . . The President asked Congress for authority to take over all idle foreign ships in United States harbors. Congress seemed ready to agree quickly. . . . Italy again protested the seizure of her freighters. . . . The State Department said that the United States would refuse to recognize a new Danish minister if one were sent to replace Mr. de Kauffmann, who signed the agreement giving the United States Greenland bases. . . . The Supreme Court limited the power of federal courts to punish for contempt, overruling a decision of twenty-three years' standing. . . . Mr. Justice Hughes celebrated his seventy-ninth birthday. . . . The United States and Britain have standardized their aircraft equipment. . . . The Metropolitan Life Insurance Company settled with the Industrial Insurance Agents' Union, CIO, after a two-and-a-half-year fight.

## Has Russia Joined the Axis?

THE Russo-Japanese Neutrality Pact means different things to the various nations directly or indirectly concerned. What it will mean in fact depends, not on its phrases, but on the future progress of the world struggle. Words on paper, we have learned in recent years, of themselves signify almost nothing.

The reasons for the Soviet Union's signing of the pact are obvious. She has become more and more uneasy about Germany's advance in the Balkans and its threat to the Near East. Moscow has not forgotten, either, Hitler's interest in the Ukraine, and must be prepared for trouble there if his hands are ever freed in the West—or possibly before. If Germany cannot afford to fight on two fronts at once, Russia can afford it much less. No doubt Stalin does not value any too highly a promise by Japan, but at least the promise gives him some chance of neutralizing his traditional Eastern foe if he becomes engaged on the West.

If this interpretation proves to be the correct one in the long run, the treaty would seem to be unpleasant news for Berlin. But Berlin has all the time been encouraging the agreement, and has repeatedly urged Japan and Russia to get together. The reason is that Hitler's interpretation is a wholly different one. He will meet the ultimate situation when he gets to it, in his own way; in the meantime he wants to free Japan's hands to create a diversion against Britain and the United States in Asia. Japan, in spite of her belligerence, has obviously been reluctant to tackle two such formidable foes, at least until she is surer than at present how the war is coming out. If she can be certain Russia will not take her in the rear, however, one possible danger is removed. It was therefore greatly to Hitler's immediate advantage that Stalin sign.

What about Japan herself? Will she now proceed full steam against Singapore and the Dutch East Indies, with the risk of a clash with the United States? Perhaps, but if her more sober strategists are in control they will think twice before embarking on such a dangerous course. We may be sure, however, that Japan will exploit the pact diplomatically to the utmost extreme. She will use it as a threat to the United States in order to prevent us from tightening the embargo or giving more aid to China. To her it is useful as a bogey, at least. And in doing so, if she attracts more American and British energy and attention to the Far East, she will be playing her part in the game of the Axis.

Is the new treaty a disaster for China? It may be, if there are secret clauses contemplating more than was announced. Though the Soviet Union openly recognizes Manchukuo, China is so far from recovering that territory that this is not in any concrete sense a great blow. Japan now recognizes Soviet dominance in Outer Mongolia, but so had China. Only if there is some private understanding looking toward a partition of China, or a recognition of Japan's conquests on the mainland, will the pact be a direct injury. Russia can even continue to send war equipment to Chiang Kai-shek if she desires; she has promised only to remain neutral if Japan is attacked, presumably by a new foe. In any case the aid the Chinese have received from Russia has not been too valuable.

The meaning for the United States is the resultant of all these cross-currents. When we assess them all, it appears that the situation has been singularly little changed. We knew Stalin was afraid of Hitler and might sometime suffer from German aggression. We knew Hitler was trying to stimulate Japan to act as a counter-irritant to our aid to Britain. We had been facing whatever threat there might be in that direction without counting on any help from the Soviet Union, and are prepared to cope with any Japanese aggression. It remains only for us not to allow Japanese bluff to use the new scarecrow in such a way as to weaken our position either in Asia or in Europe. If we steadfastly refuse to be alarmed—and consideration shows that there is no reason to be alarmed—the pact will mean nothing new for us.

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# Training for Defense

WE HAVE BEEN cheerfully assuming that all young people of employable age would speedily be occupied in manning our defenses, but this assumption seems now to be false. By next July we shall still have an estimated reserve of 3,863,000 young men and women.[1] The 17-25 age group constitutes slightly more than one-third of our unemployed, but it seems to be getting only about one-fourth of the jobs. There are several reasons for this. First, defense contracts have been concentrated in exactly those areas where the problem of excess youth is least pressing. Second, the demand has been for skills which the depression-matured had few opportunities to acquire.

Thus we have a great reservoir of workers who in muscular coördination, capacity for endurance, and enthusiasm are at, or approaching, the prime of life, but who lack the training that would make them useful. The best of them must be trained at once. Admiral E. A. Land, chairman of the Maritime Commission, estimates that shipbuilders will need 450,000 workers in the next eighteen months, of whom 120,000 must be skilled key men and 275,000 semi-skilled and unskilled. In scores of other industries the cry is for knowing hands. At a time when our national safety depends upon getting our industrial potential into high gear, it is ridiculous that we should be delayed by a shortage in one of our chief surpluses—labor.

But how shall we train youth? Through the Defense Training program the Office of Education offers courses in draftsmanship and other technical subjects. The vocational schools have equipment and they have been given $75,000,000 for defense training. The schools have drilled some 500,000 in mechanics, but they none the less work under certain handicaps. They have older curricular obligations, they cannot always simulate an atmosphere that encourages good work habits; their locally autonomous school boards are under pressure from a few craft unions which want to limit the labor supply; finally, 70 percent of the vocational schools are located in eight states. By December, 1940, the schools had spent probably only about $20,000,000 of their allotment.

There are private trade schools, too. Some do a good job, and some are distinguished more by greed than competence; *in toto* they do not count for much in this emergency. Industry itself offers limited training opportunities. The smaller plants are doing something and can do more, but the giant corporations which are getting a large portion of the defense contracts have become integrated into industrial-financial mechanisms of such fine balance that their ability to absorb inexperienced workers is severely limited. There are contributions from all these sources, as there are from the WPA and others. But they are far from adequate.

The National Youth Administration has the organization, the experience, the social intelligence and some of the equipment. Now operating in virtually every county in the United States, it has several thousand production units in which it is already giving the kind of practical experience in metal and wood-work which industry demands, and for which key defense shops show their approval by hiring between five and six thousand NYA "graduates" a month. This is learning by doing in the better sense. NYA workers have put an old New York shipyard into shape and are now repairing boats in it; their on-job training is supplemented by classes in background theory at a nearby technical high school. At Providence, Rhode Island, the NYA, for all its large turnover, puts out torpedo parts for the navy which get A1 rating by naval inspectors. The South Charleston, West Virginia, project is making 10,000 metal beds for the army; in one two-week period 72 boys got full-time jobs in nearby industries.

Not all of NYA's 26,000 projects are devoted to defense, of course, but many of them are and more can be if Congress gives the go-ahead signal and provides funds for additional youth wages and equipment. However the NYA is coördinated with other defense training, it is logical that it play a central role in training the 17-25 age group. And it is just as logical that the non-defense activities of NYA should not be crippled. The people on these projects are from low-income homes. Many of them vitally need the opportunity, the encouragement, the discipline and the few dollars a month that NYA provides, and even if all of them are not being prepared for work on lathes, they will be vitally important from the point of view of national morale and skills in supportive and consumer industries. We can't all aim the cannon; some of the brave must feed the man who does.

[1] Including 2,663,000 on emergency work or seeking work in December, 1940, plus 1,500,000 unpaid family workers and 500,000 subsistence farmers, young married women and others who could easily be attracted into the labor market. From this total must be subtracted 375,000 who are expected to find new industrial jobs, and 500,000 who may be absorbed into military services. Finally, 75,000 are added for population increase in the 17-25 age group.

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# The People of Yugoslavia

THE FATE of all of us may be decided in some Yugoslav village or Hungarian coffee-shop," John Gunther wrote in the introduction to my book, "Plot and Counterplot in Central Europe," in 1937. Though World War I started because of a shooting in the Balkan town of Sarajevo, we all, and especially Britain, had forgotten the importance of those remote yet vital corners of the European continent. How often did I try to explain to British statesmen and editors the importance of the Balkans in a coming new world conflagration—in vain! It was too remote, too distant. But not for Germany.

Under the leadership of Kemal Ataturk, King Alexander of Yugoslavia and Eleutherios Venizelos, the Balkans attempted to unite their forces and resist an offender against the sovereignty of any of them. If the British had realized the importance of this new formation and not let Schacht and other Germans penetrate into the Balkan sanctuary, many things would be different now. But the appeasers told me in Britain: "We have to give some living space to the Germans. If they expand to the southeast, they will not turn against the west."

How wrong, how shortsighted! The Germans needed the Balkans for its foodstuffs and raw materials, essential to the conduct of a successful war against the west. The most important of those came from Rumania and Yugoslavia. Transylvania supplies gold, silver, zinc, lead and other metals. On the southern slope of the Rumanian Carpathians are the oil wells of Prahova, Ploesti, Moreni and Buzeu. These are now in German hands.

Even should Yugoslavia have to surrender quickly, the declaration of war against her by Germany will cause a dislocation of important raw materials, especially if the Serbs destroy certain mines before they fall into Nazi hands. Yugoslavia has metals vital to German industries. Next to Spain, she was the chief supplier of copper to Germany. The French-owned copper-ore mines and copper refineries at Maidanpek and the French-controlled copper plants at the Bor mines in Serbia were an important German source of this metal. The Yugoslavian manganese-ore mines at Priedor in Bosnia are all the more important to German war industries since Russia is greatly restricting her supply to her "pact friend." Yugoslavia supplied large quantities of iron ore and steel from Vares and Zenica in Bosnia, but this can be replaced by ore coming from France. Very important is the supply of bauxite (aluminum ore) from Bosnia. Destruction of crops in Yugoslavia, a source of much wheat, rye, corn, hogs and cattle, would be a blow to Germany.

All of us were elated when we heard that Yugoslavia had defied the Nazis. In a corner of our hearts we felt that these unfortunate people probably were facing annihilation, but we were proud that they proved to be *men*. The Serbs value friendship, fidelity, sanctity of one's word and the love of country beyond life itself. I know that in the last war Serbian soldiers continued to shoot when they were seriously wounded, and died with their rifles still in their hands.

The Serbs fight because combat is a tradition with them. For centuries they fought the oppression of Turkish sultans and pashas. It was in Serbia that the first fire of liberty was kindled in southeastern Europe, at the beginning of the nineteenth century. In February, 1804, Karageorge hoisted the flag of insurrection, and in 1806 the Serbian revolutionaries succeeded in driving out the janissaries from the fortress of Belgrade on the Kalimegdan. Their example was followed by the Greeks in 1821.

If heroism and courage were the chief qualities of the Serbs, friendship and loyalty were not the least of their virtues. The Serb will sacrifice life and fortune for his bosom friend. If two men become especially good friends, they regard each other and their families as blood relations. Such a friendship is called *podbratimstvo*. The *podbratim*, or bloodbrother, is as dear as a father or brother, and nearly as close is the *kumstvo*, or godfathership. These friendships and loyalties, in addition to family life, make the life of the individual Serb rich and full.

The sense of community and the loyalty of family to family, of man to man, also is increased in Serbia by an old tradition which still survives in some parts, but which was almost the general way of life in many parts of Serbia only two generations ago. This is the *zadruga*, a kind of community and communal ownership established within the family or the tribe. The tribal hierarchy survived with this *zadruga*, and members of the tribe have always obeyed the order of the *staresina*, or elder.

It is one of the many tragedies of the present war that these remarkable Serbs had no decent equipment to withstand the onslaught of the Nazi motorized units. Yet we must not forget that Serbia was conquered during the last war by better-equipped German troops, and yet ultimately won out.

The Serbs, however, are only one of the many groups inhabiting Yugoslavia. We have often read that the Croats are pro-Nazi. Fundamentally this is not true, since the Croat is just as liberty-loving and jealous of his independence as is the Serb. Unfortunately the two peoples had trouble settling their differences. The Germans of course exploited this cleavage, yet only a

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small section of Croatian public opinion sided with Nazi Germany. The Croatian Peasant Party, led by Vladimir Matchek, was democratic; certain intellectuals and students, however, were ready to ally themselves with the devil to obtain an independent Croatia. A former leader of this movement was Ivo Frank, and his followers were called the Frankovci. They were prominently mentioned when the French investigation into the murder of King Alexander established that the spiritual head of the conspiracy against the King's life was Ante Pavelic, a leading Frankovci. He was in Italy when the murder occurred. Another important figure in this conspiracy was Kvaternik, Hitler's new "Premier of Croatia." Kvaternik is the Croatian Quisling, and the German description of popular jubilation greeting the Nazi invasion must be reduced to the loud cheers of a bunch of students.

Why were Croats and Serbs, otherwise akin in race and language, in disagreement? The feud between them is perhaps a good example of the fallacy of Hitler's racial dogma. Here were two nations of exactly the same blood. The Croatian and Serbian tribes which in the early centuries of our age lived somewhere near the present site of Berlin, detached themselves in the sixth century A. D., from the other Slavs (Czechs, Slovaks and especially Poles) in northern Europe and migrated to new homes. The Croats settled where they now live. The Serbs settled near what is now Montenegro. The Croats came under the influence of the church of Rome; the Serbs under that of Byzantium. Croatia remained under Western influence; Serbia was for centuries under Eastern influence. The language remained identical, but the Serbs wrote with Cyrilian letters, the Croats with Latin letters. This created two different worlds.

The Croat is liberty-loving and democratic, but while the Serb is temperamental the Croat is slow, but steady, and irresistible in the end. Such is the force of Croatian opposition that even the Hungarians, who were tough rulers of their nationalities, had to grant autonomy to Croatia in 1867. The Croat is courageous, a good soldier, and a splendid host.

The Slovenes, numbering about one million in the northwestern corner of Yugoslavia, have a language of their own, though it is intelligible to the Serbs and the Croats. The Slovenes lived under Austrian rule for centuries and are highly civilized.

The Macedonians form a minority of about three-quarters of a million, speaking a Slav idiom which is between Serb and Bulgarian, and live in the corner of Yugoslavia where the hot fighting started in the present blitzkrieg—at and around Skoplje. They were endeavoring to obtain autonomy from Serbia, and for many years were hostile to the new Yugoslav state. They formerly belonged to the Bulgarian exarchate of the Orthodox Church. During the last two decades they have been exploited by Fascist Italy and later by Nazi Germany.

M. W. FODOR

# The British Press in Wartime

BEFORE THE WAR many people in London, including newspaper editors, believed Britain would adopt a brand of fascism from the first day of hostilities, and that curtailment of civil liberties would inevitably involve forfeiture of the freedom of the press. They were wrong. The British government under both Chamberlain and Churchill has allowed the press a latitude in criticism which is a constant and refreshing surprise. Legitimate grievances against the government and its policies have found an easy outlet in the dailies and periodicals. Although it possesses emergency power to exterminate any publication inciting opposition to the war, in the first sixteen and a half months of the conflict the government did not suppress a single newspaper. On January 21, 1941, it interrupted that clear record by banning the Communist Daily Worker without a judicial hearing.

Previously the Fascist weekly Action had ceased publication, but it was not actually suppressed. On May 23, 1940, the government arrested Mosley and some seven hundred other Fascists, and Action, deprived of leadership, died after one more edition. On July 10 the Fascist Party was outlawed.

Government authority over newspapers is anchored in two provisions of the Defense Regulations. One is Article 2C, concerning "corruption of public morale," making it an offense "systematically to publish matter which, in the Home Secretary's opinion, is calculated to foment opposition to a successful issue of any war in which His Majesty is engaged." The Home Secretary must first warn the publisher, who becomes liable to imprisonment up to seven years if he persists in the offense. The Home Secretary can then warn anyone else on the newspaper's staff—for instance, the editor or manager—and put each on the spot. If, as a result of this, a new staff be placed in control, the legal barrage can be directed against them until all are imprisoned.

This regulation was later sharpened by adding Article 2D, entitled "Control of Newspapers," enabling the Home Secretary to omit the formality of warning and declare in effect: "I think this newspaper, which is provoking opposition to the war, is a damned nuisance," and to issue an order applying 2D to the paper. Thereafter nobody may print, publish or distribute that newspaper.

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It was under 2D that The Daily Worker was prohibited. With a daily circulation of 60,000, which rose to 120,000 at week-ends, it was the only paper of any size which was outright anti-war, and it naturally afflicted members of the government with chronic toothache. Alfred Duff Cooper, Minister of Information, and his Cabinet colleagues read The Worker regularly and were continually enraged by its anti-war propaganda, servility to Moscow and occasional services to Hitler. High government voices had been raised in favor of banning it, but Duff Cooper, although a stanch Conservative, opposed such action on the grounds that The Worker preached mostly to the converted, while others were likely to be repelled by its attitude.

Truth obliged even its enemies to admit that The Worker was sometimes right: it presented extensive plans for air-raid shelters, including use of subway stations for that purpose, many months before the government itself adopted many of those measures. But such oases of wisdom were lost in the desert of The Worker's follies. It constantly told its readers there was nothing to choose between the two sides in this war, for they were both imperialist bandits. It repeatedly defended Hitler, but never Chamberlain or Churchill. As early as February 1, 1940, The Worker said: "Hitler repeated once again his claim that the war was thrust upon him by Britain. Against this historical fact there is no reply." A month before the Germans overran Holland, it wrote that there appeared to be no evidence of any German preparations for invading Holland, yet such stories were being circulated throughout the world from Allied sources. What, The Worker asked, was the motive? "If these stories are untrue, what possible reason can there be for spreading them, except that the Allies are trying to prepare the atmosphere for an invasion of Holland by themselves?"

On April 10, 1940, the world press splashed the news that Germany had invaded Denmark and Norway. The Daily Worker's front page that day, beneath a four-column banner line, displayed a Communist Party manifesto on the spread of the war to Scandinavia, branding the British and French governments as responsible for the war's extension. The manifesto performed the miracle of trumpeting 800 words without in a single phrase mentioning that it was Germany which had invaded Denmark and Norway. The only clear intimation of the German invasion anywhere in the paper was buried in an hour-by-hour diary printed on the back page.

This paper's policy culminated at Christmas, 1940, with the suggestion to the armed forces that every soldier on the British Isles was entitled to, and with a little effort could get, "a clear seven days leave." There followed the falsehood that innumerable troops already on leave had decided to stay on leave. The Worker conducted this campaign at a moment when Churchill was declaring that Hitler's invasion of Britain was probable.

Churchill has now put an end to The Daily Worker. He was principally responsible for the decision to suppress the paper and he was seconded mainly by Herbert Morrison, able socialist Home Secretary, and Sir John Anderson, illiberal Lord President of the Council. Duff Cooper opposed. The British press, excepting a tiny handful of leftist publications, supported the decision; even The Manchester Guardian, bastion of liberalism, wrote of The Worker on the morrow of its suppression, "We can well spare it." One week later a four-hour debate ended in Parliament's approval of the government's action by the overwhelming majority of 297 to 11, with a fair though not officially tabulated number of labor and liberal abstentions.

In the debate and in some influential newspapers the government was cautioned to avoid the toboggan toward gag rule. Though the case against The Worker was strong, an articulate minority believes the government should have prosecuted on a specific charge instead of aping the dictators' methods. The Cabinet now knows that any further encroachment on the free press will arouse a storm of protest. Liberty of the press has by no means been abolished, and I do not believe any such development is in sight.

Three factors have set a limit to press criticism of official policies: (1) the libel law, harshest of any land; (2) erasure of party strife in the common struggle; (3) a traditional conformism, often docility, for which the British press and British journalists, with notable exceptions, are famous. As Humbert Wolfe wrote:

> You cannot hope to bribe or twist,
> Thank God, the British journalist;
> But seeing what the man will do
> Unbribed, there's no occasion to.

Even in peacetime the scoop-minded American correspondent in London was constantly startled to hear his British colleague boast of the dramatic and sensational news he spontaneously suppressed last week. The most influential newspapers in Britain are owned by about half a dozen men, from Lord Kemsley to Lord Beaverbrook, and they are all among the country's rulers, whether government office-holders or not. This partly accounts for their journalistic employees' restraint. In many cases the British newspaperman shrinks from attacking the government because it involves assailing his boss and, especially if habitual, risking his job.

The newspaper proprietor sometimes does the muzzling. Last December Hilaire Belloc, one of the most distinguished English men of letters, ceased contributing his weekly articles to the pro-government Sunday Times and it was reliably said that he had been dismissed for having written that Italian warships, damaged by the British in their daring raid on Taranto,

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would be repaired in a few weeks. I know of no similar instance of editorial muzzling during the war, although now as before a word from a government minister to an editor or publisher over tea cups or whisky-and-soda is usually enough to influence policy.

Many months before The Worker was suppressed, the government flirted with the notion of taking action against certain newspapers and of expanding its own power to curb the press. In July, 1940, Sir John Anderson, then Home Secretary, sent a letter to The Worker, reminding the chairman of the Communist daily's board, Professor J. B. S. Haldane, of Article 2C of the Defense Regulations, but when Haldane asked Anderson what offense the paper had committed, he never received a specific answer. About that time, Clement Attlee, Lord Privy Seal and leader of the Labor Party, summoned the chiefs of The Daily Mirror and The Sunday Pictorial and warned them that the line taken by their papers was subversive.

Taunts from these papers stung Churchill and on October 8, 1940, he lashed out against the press in Parliament.

"Let me say," he declared, "that criticism which is well meant and well informed and searching is often helpful, but there is a tone in certain organs of the press, happily not numerous, a tone not only upon the Dakar episode but other and more important issues, that is so vicious and malignant that it would be almost indecent if applied to the enemy."

Discontinuance of the government's tolerance was at times a near thing, even months before The Worker was snuffed out. A government committee, with Chamberlain as chairman, considered three proposals: (1) to substitute compulsory for voluntary censorship of the British press (now editors submit news to the censor only when in doubt as to its discretion, but if they omit such submission and print news of value to the Axis, they risk prosecution—the rules exempt opinion from all censorship); (2) to limit all news published in British papers to official bulletins, leaving only comment unrestricted; (3) to create a Board of Censors which would lay down regulations, for violation of which publishers, editors and other journalists were liable to severe punishment. The Newspaper Proprietors' Association was consulted and promptly turned down all three projects. Duff Cooper himself finally advised Chamberlain and his committee that advantages which the state might win by a tighter grip on the press would be offset by newspaper owners' and journalists' resentment and hostility. The committee abandoned the whole plan.

Another time, also months before The Worker was suppressed, the government's liberal record in press policy once had a tight squeak in the Cabinet. The Daily Mirror and The Sunday Pictorial had been savagely attacking Chamberlain after he had become Lord President of the Council under Churchill. Day after day they echoed the words which a member of Parliament hurled at Chamberlain: "In the name of God, go!" Their denunciations of Chamberlain first irritated Churchill, then profoundly angered him. When they persisted in their campaign Churchill finally proposed suppression of both papers to his Cabinet colleagues. Duff Cooper answered the Prime Minister at the Cabinet meeting:

"Winston," he cried, "if you prohibit those newspapers, everybody will say that the Chamberlain government could take it, but the Churchill government can't!"

The topic was not again alluded to.

Although practically unanimous in supporting the war, the British press has never been coy in upbraiding the government for real or alleged shortcomings. It vigorously attacked the government's treatment of India, and, like American newspapers, it raked Churchill over the coals for severing China's supply artery by closing the Burma Road. The government's policy toward Russia has also been under heavy crossfire from newspapers of the Left and Right.

Domestic affairs naturally being closest to the Briton's heart, it is in that field that the British press has most often and mercilessly attacked the government. Bad air-raid-shelter conditions, ruthless internment of friendly aliens, disorder in the educational system after mass evacuation of urban schoolchildren and alleged fumbling of food control have been foremost among the newspapers' targets at home.

Chaotic school conditions resulting from evacuation have also been exposed by the press:

The New Statesman: "'We have practically given up elementary education in despair. We have done everything we could to keep it going, but the thing has been too much for us. In London education has gone by the board.' The speaker was an eminent member of the London County Council. Were things, I wondered, really as bad as that? Here for what they are worth are the results of some inquiries I have made with a view to verifying my friend's estimate of the situation. They confirm it with melancholy completeness."

The Yorkshire Post: "We cannot afford to let our educational system, which is the strength of our democracy and should be its pride, become a casualty of the blitzkrieg. . . . Half measures will not do."

The press has also had much to do with halting the indiscriminate internment of refugees. Early this year the Home Secretary, Herbert Morrison, told me that of 27,000 internees about 9,000 had been freed and the status of another 14,000 was being reviewed.

Now that The Daily Worker is dead, I know of no British newspapers which are anti-war, except the Communist Youth's Challenge, the pacifist Peace News and The New Leader.

*London* FREDERICK KUH

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# Five Poems

## The Way Is Rough

The way is rough,
no further go;
here is enough
of beauty, though

with every step
new points deploy,
new beaches dip;
enough is joy.

On all the shore
no whiter spray;
no gulls are more
pristine than they

that soar and call
and fleck the breeze
as petals fall
from cherry trees.

This cliff shall serve
as haven free;
the heaven's curve
your shelter be;

blueberry bush,
ground pine and bay
together push
the rocks away.

Let ocean flow
for here at hand
sweet grasses grow,
red lilies stand;

and far at sea
is now the sail
will ever be
too far to hail.

## Enigma

Moon,
swan remote
on a great lake of sky,
gliding down
over a wave
of vapor—
lone as a loon
in a wilderness
by water—
moon, like a taper
in a lofty nave—
like a round note,
a clear, delicious call—
moon, like a royal daughter,
small
and shy,
in her father's hall,
in ceremonial gown—
anemone of white
in a black glade—
or water-lily light
on the liquid shade
of a round pond—
or like an icy breeze;

—like all these
but beyond
all these,
the moon.

## Capture

Night, the big butterfly hunter,
  casts his net over the cove—
vivid fritillary sunset,
  clinging to blossom of mauve,
flutters and flares for a moment,
  sucking the honey of dusk—
falls to the lurking collector,
  leaving the heaven a husk.

## Lost

Unnumbered are the years
as needles of the pine
depositing a mine
within the heavy groves
that toward the lake incline.

Insensible the ears,
inaudible the sound,
when drifting to the ground
a single needle roves
and nevermore is found.

## Syllable

Clear as a signal, stark
on a rock stands the gull;
round him the breathing wind
and the water revolve;
drastic and focal the mark
that he makes on the day,
stamped on the vision
with all else falling away—
plumage gray
as the sky, white
as the spray,
emblem of light
and dark

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and a deep decision,
muted, seeming to hark
a question, seeming to solve—
hard in the eyes the answer,
pinned
as prey.

An unseen impresario and dancer
moving and changing these
effects of air and cloud,
expanded, thinned,
shifting the sand and stone
and the splintered sea,
ballet of breeze
and tempest, soft and loud,
forms for a moment full
in a pattern free,
deployed before us,
a stage, a drop, a chorus
for a still gull
alone.

PEGGY BACON

# "The Beethoven of the North"

TO A VERY YOUNG, eminently talented composer lately come from Europe and eager to establish himself in American life, a friend proffered the following advice: "As you value your future, utter no criticism of Jan Sibelius! Judge, if you feel you must, Brahms, Beethoven, John Sebastian Bach. You can do that with impunity. You can even, incredible as it may seem, animadvert on Toscanini, blame the Italian overrapidity of his Beethoven tempi, condemn his atrocious taste. Truths about Sibelius, however, keep strictly to yourself: you dare entrust them to no one. He is a fetish: refusal to do him homage will rouse the wrath of the influential critics, the conductors and the sacred cows; place you completely underneath the ban."

The young composer naturally, at first, thought his friend a humorist. He had, it is true, perceived the plethora of Sibelius performances in American concert halls and over radio networks. With considerable amazement he had observed the recapitulation of the Finnish composer's seven symphonies, tone-poems, smaller compositions, at a rate far faster then that at which the major works of Bach, Beethoven, even Tchaikovsky were being repeated. Everyone was conducting the Second Symphony as though he saw the Light through it: almost everybody, the Fifth. Koussevitzsky was giving the Seventh over and over and over again: "It is Sibelius' 'Parsifal'," he said. At the Stadium they exhumed the Canzonetta. Singers at the Town Hall tried out entire programs of his songs. Which is to say there was a quantity of honest windlike soughing up and down and shrieking in the fiddles; groans from the darker woodwinds; ominous pronouncements from the brasses, with here and there an entry for the oboe in the mode of the oaten pipe. Nor was there want of lyricism in the folk-style or unequivocal statements of the woes and ecstasies brought by "Flickan" from the trysting-place. These excesses our youthful friend had none the less attributed to a spirit of concession toward that portion of the public with a taste for inferior art—a spirit necessitated in musical directors by *le chapitre des finances*. That serious musicians and critics could conceive of Sibelius as a composer of major rank appeared impossible. He was not too youthful to have been able independently to form a sober opinion of the merits of the Finn's symphonic works: it had, besides, never been brought into question. On the Continent Helsinki's greatest citizen was considered a creator entirely of the second order, a symphonist of relatively low stature, much closer to the level of the Griegs and Rachmaninovs than to that of the major musicians with whom masses of the English, Canadian and American audiences irresponsibly compare him.

Then of an evening, in the intimacy of one of their bridge-games, four famous instrumentalists gravely informed their new compatriot that in certain prominent respects Sibelius equaled the greatest masters. Silence reigned in the house of judgment: next day as the young man sat in the music-room of the Library over Oscar Thompson's International Cyclopedia of Music and Musicians, his eye fell on the long article on Sibelius over the signature of The New York Times's chief music-critic. He read that the Finnish composer was "a lonely and towering figure in the music of the early twentieth century—a gigantic figure striding out of a heroic past either forgotten or existent merely in legend." References to "the epical spirit of [his] symphonic compositions" were flanked by statements that "some *authorities* [the italics are, needless to remark, not in the text] rank him as the next symphonist after Brahms and Beethoven." The article did not date from Olin Downes's green and salad days, and it had been edited in 1939. Suddenly the reader remembered having heard other judicial voices calling Sibelius "the Beethoven of the North." Resolutely he stepped to the desk and put in an order for the scores of Sibelius' vaunted seven.

By no means all he found left him unsympathetic and unadmiring. Moments of true music—lyrical phrases, unexpectedly dramatic passages—were not wanting here. None the less, the scores made him aware of the note of seriousness in the advice that had been given him; and gazing over their edges he thought to

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face a fact and did face a question. The fact he thought to face was the absence from the minds of the musicians and critics to whom he had lately been listening—an absence perfect at least at the moments in which they had delivered themselves of their verdicts—of standards of measurement based upon correct information, correct judgment, correct taste; and the reality of the possibility that what obtained instead of such standards was unreasoning reverence and blind devotion. The question he had to consider was whether the country that so generously had adopted him and that lay before him "so various, so new," did indeed possess any standards in esthetic and intellectual matters. He was not in the least unaware that the popularity of Sibelius might have become widespread under the very nose of regnant standards, since in the past their existence had never been able to deprive inferior art of its capacity to make a place for itself. He did, however, know that in centers of sound information, judgment and taste, inferior art had never had the power to gain the upper hand: hence the somewhat painful suspense in which he gazed into the misty reaches present to his mental eye.

Personally we believe that this young man had perceived a real state of things. Sibelius without doubt is a craftsman of great probity. Conscientious workmanship has passed equally into his popular pieces, his incidental music for the theatre, his symphonic structures. Neither can there be question of his orchestral virtuosity. He has worked economically within the limits of the romantic orchestra; and his instrumentation is structural, not superficial. The body of his forms are determined from the orchestra itself: whatever the quality of his thought, it is profoundly accentuated by his scoring. He has original methods of spacing; has wrung bold solo effects with considerable skill from single instrumental voices and groups, particularly in the somberly colored registers. Several of his symphonic pieces in shorter form—notably The Swan of Tuonela, with its dark, attractive coloring, haunting melody for English horn, eerie harmonies in the strings, and En Saga and Finlandia—are simple, lovely, deserving of their popularity. The main characteristic of genius none the less is energy; and energy equal to the demands of the larger symphonic forms—that, Jan Sibelius would appear never to have possessed.

The "symphonic" manifestation of energy *par excellence* is formal continuity, is line. It is the gift of spinning out material ideas; the unflagging art of renewal and of balance. The born symphonist initially develops themes and melodic germs capable of a certain progenitiveness into shapely and rounded phrases of considerable length. In a manner not unlike that of the spruce tree sending out new shoots from the tips of the old, but more unpredictably, he evolves, projects, deploys from these phrases other solid periods simultaneously related to and contrasted with them. As solid and sustained phrase freely and organically follows and balances phrase, so movement freely and organically follows and balances movement. This continuous burgeoning and satisfactory flow was variously achieved by the great masters—Bach, Haydn, Mozart, Beethoven, Schubert; even by Brahms, by Tchaikovsky and some lesser men—certain of them our contemporaries. Sibelius on the other hand practically never has attained it. Vainly one searches his symphonies for well constituted phrases of any considerable length, a length of thirty-two measures, say, that really come off. The braying theme for brass in the finale of the Fifth Symphony cannot be considered such a one: its breadth is merely apparent. Actually it labors: it is composed of iterations. (Equally iterative is the theme of the finale of the Second Symphony.) The gentle melody of the slow movement of the First Symphony—a work still the most lyrical and rewarding of Sibelius' experiments in the bigger forms—for its part bravely starts off, only to dwindle in echoes. The thematic material of that apple of the eyes of all the composer's admirers, the Seventh Symphony, doesn't even leave the amebic stage, refusing to gain and gather flesh. This, one fears, is the celebrated "concision."

Similarly inadequate are the continuities between phrase and phrase. One must certainly look far in musical literature to find symphonic movements as unflowering, as meagerly furnished, as are the scherzi of Sibelius' Second and Fourth Symphonies. Where in other movements interrelationships of phrases and of ideas are attempted, these, as Fred Jacobi has pointed out, mainly confine themselves to contrasts between the instrumental colors in which the phrases and melodies have been plunged. The material mills about more than it progresses. Take the slow movement of the Fifth Symphony, the set of variations on a folksong subject. The alterations are so characterless, so indistinguishable one from another, that the whole passes like something which did not quite occur. Again and again the symphonies get us nowhere.

And the abuse of the instrumental tremolo! No other symphonic composer, few operatic, even, have so relentlessly exploited this easy device for engendering tension and feelings of mystery. It goes far, this misuse, to corroborate a conviction excited by passages in Sibelius such as the latter part of the Fifth Symphony's opening allegro, where the initial tension evaporates in the *ländler* while we endure a sort of emotional deception and have a sense of a lapsing objectivity in the composer. The conviction is that, sincere as is the experience overhanging the seven symphonies—the moods of grimness, of apprehension, perceptions of the elemental, idyllic and pastoral feelings—it tends to pass into vagueness and an unsteady grasp of realities. Hence the present writer's assurance that this young exile was quite correct in setting down the conceptions responsible for that nonsense about "the Beethoven of the North" to disregarded standards and tastes that shun the light of reason—an assurance incidentally intensified by still another circumstance.

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This is the circumstance that the identities of certain irrational and unconscious tastes—which have barricaded themselves in the Sibelius cult, and may have made criticism of him the dangerous criticism of a fetish—seem clear to the present writer. One of them appears to be the relish for familiar experience—or better, an aversion to new. Not only is Sibelius a survivor of the late-romantic period and the author of work bare of important challenges to the public's habits of mind. His art, broadly, is derived from Tchaikovsky's. It was Tchaikovsky's conventional symphonic structure, conjunct form of themes, methods of dynamic intensification; it also is indebted to this relatively heroic progenitor for more than hints of ideas. And: the works of the "great Russian weeper," possibly because of their sentimentality, enjoy a favor of a dimension among Anglo-Saxon audiences whose like they never achieved among continental audiences—outside Russia, of course, where "Eugene Onegin" is considered a great opera.—Another of these tastes would seem to be a nostalgic predilection for the exotic. A composer who frequently has had his native northern landscape fervently in mind; the author of numerous charming folklorist program-pieces, Sibelius with his groaning, gnawing sonorities, love of the dark registers, art-music in Scandinavian folksong-spirit and similar local references, naturally evokes images of wind-lashed lakes, dancing polar lights, forests bearded with moss, lonely cow-pastures with here or there a blonde *en costume de fête* plaiting a wreath of immortelles: the idealization in fine of the rural-nordic scene haunting those who cannot live elsewhere than in cities.

As for the young exile's question whether this country indeed possesses standards in esthetic and intellectual matters, one feels distressfully that it must be allowed; but one would have difficulty in answering it. Sibelius indeed has been magnified into a musical Thor if not an Ymir; and the overdoses of his work, the grotesque eulogies which recently have found their pretext in his seventy-fifth birthday, are but examples of events that are occurring in all the fields of art in quantities sufficient to provoke the negative answer. What prompts one to withhold it is mainly the sense that for the last decade the country has been in an abnormal condition of intellectual divagation. These have been the years that have turned Sibelius into Juggernaut; providing the conditions which enabled critics like Cecil Gray and his English and American coadjutors to persuade the frightened musicians that they were right in being delighted by the seven-branched candlestick of the Finnish composer. The previous decade valued him perhaps more romantically, but correctly. Besides, one feels something maturing in the American universities—possibly a new generation with standards. Another question, meanwhile emerging, facilitates the suspension of an answer. This new question is, what will happen to our young friend should he indeed discover that his new fatherland still is provincial? Will the knowledge break him, as it has broken other men of promise? Or will it cause him to square his shoulders and tell himself that all standards have had origins, and that these origins mainly are the creators? How splendid, should it prove him to be that sort!

PAUL ROSENFELD

# Still a Pacifist

I RECEIVED A LETTER the other day attacking me on serious grounds. Since I have received others of a similar character, and since the attitude for which I was criticized is shared by a large number of American progressives, perhaps I may be pardoned if I take space for a personal statement.

This letter accused me of having abandoned the principles, which I had advocated for many years, of pacifism in the international field. It charged that I had turned from this position to being a "warmonger," and that I was partly to blame for the fact that the United States would probably be tricked into war on behalf of British imperialism and would become a fascist country in the process.

I deny that the accusation is true or that the predictions are likely to be fulfilled if we act with any degree of reasonable intelligence.

Strictly speaking, I am not and never have been a pacifist, in the sense of being a complete believer in non-violence. Not only do I disagree personally with this position, but I have always assumed that it will be maintained by such a small proportion of the total population that it will have no importance in the world of affairs. But while the strict pacifists would have disowned me at any time in the past, my hostile critics use this word and perhaps justify my doing so. It is quite true that I have believed all my life that war is a negation of all the best values of civilization, that it is the worst possible way of settling international disputes and that it could be abolished if we had enough collective good will and intelligence. I have opposed every imperialistic adventure on the part of our government and I neither regret this course in the past nor propose to alter it in the future. I criticized our army and navy for demanding increased expenditures at a time when the generals and admirals themselves knew no real reason for greater armament but were simply trying to maximize the importance of the services by spending more money on them. I now regret that neither the admirals nor the generals, myself, nor any-

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body else realized that France would be destroyed by the German war machine in about a month; but no individual need reproach himself too hard for a universally shared inability to read the future.

I do not feel that I am among the group of whom their critics say that they are "opposed to every war except the current one," whatever that current one may be. For many years I have urged that the United States should never fight except in self-defense, but should certainly do so when its own safety is imperiled. I am advocating precisely that course today.

It seems to me proved beyond any possible doubt that Hitler intends to rule the whole world, that he has already gone farther on that road than any other man who ever lived, that he still has a chance of succeeding, and that the dogged British resistance is today the main obstacle in his path. If Britain falls, I am certain that we shall be attacked, though I do not know whether the order will be America and then Russia, or vice versa. The isolationists are probably right in saying that to land a German army on our seaboard while our fleet is intact would be an impossible task; but it is absurd to suppose, as my old friend John T. Flynn seems to do, that because of this we can afford to sit back and let Hitler conquer Europe, Africa, Asia and South America up as far as Panama. In the first place, our military situation would be greatly changed for the worse if this had happened. We would be subject to a simultaneous attack by Germany and Japan on both coasts, and from the south, that would be very difficult to meet. In the second place, even though our exports and imports constitute only 10 percent of our total trade, it is an extremely important 10 percent. Hitler could do us great harm by cutting off both items as a part of a process of softening us up before conquest, as he has softened up other nations. It is nonsense to say that he would need our goods and would therefore go on trading with us. He has repeatedly subordinated economic motives to military ones.

In the third place, the complacent isolationist overlooks the fact that we have a great many anti-democrats right here in the United States. Long before Hitler had finished his triumphal march around the world, our native Quislings would have been emboldened to take control—and with a greatly heightened chance of success. They would probably call their fascism anti-fascism; but that would not make it any easier to bear.

The isolationist defeatism makes much of the argument that to help Britain fight Hitler is hopeless, because the English can never get a foothold on the Continent and that therefore the war must continue for years, perhaps for generations. This argument ignores the fact that for months the British have had a foothold on the Continent, with some thousands of troops in Greece. It is possible that that foothold may be lost; but this does not mean that it could not be found again. More important is the fact, which the American isolationists constantly forget, that the actual Nazis in Europe number perhaps eighty million or less out of a total population of nearly three hundred million. The majority of the Europeans (and this includes many Germans) hate Hitler and are only waiting for the day when they can rise against him. The Americans and the British are their only hope, but a very great one. We can do much to help these enslaved millions in a physical sense. We can do even more in a moral sense, by letting them know in clear and unmistakable terms that we envisage a kind of world completely different from the Nazi one of brutality and lies; that democracy is for us not just a pretty name for the continuance of an economic and cultural situation many aspects of which are far indeed from being pretty.

The isolationists say triumphantly that this cannot be a war for democracy because in Britain there are deep gulfs between the classes and widespread poverty among exploited workers. Moreover, there is precious little democracy in some parts of the empire—India, for example, which is held against her will by force of arms. Greece is a dictatorship, and so are Turkey and Russia, whose aid is solicited. In Yugoslavia the Serbs have been cruel to the Croats. Even China has in it elements of ruthless tyranny.

These statements are all true in a greater or less degree; but they seem to me to miss the main point at issue.

This main point is that the countries of the world cannot be separated into blacks and whites. There are good and bad elements, institutions, customs and traditions in all of them. The present government of Germany is preponderantly bad because of the gangster elements that have seized control and have both destroyed peace and freedom for the Germans and threatened the peace and freedom of all other countries throughout the world. In the United States, there are also individuals and institutions that are anti-democratic; but they are not in control, and I hope they can be kept from attaining such a position. The point to remember is that *a country can change;* its status is not fixed and immovable. The people who believe in a sane and decent world must fight simultaneously against the forces of insanity and indecency abroad and at home. In both its phases, this is a hard and dreary task; but there is no alternative. We are engaged in a struggle whose seriousness most Americans have not yet begun to realize. If we do not fight for the kind of world we wish to see, our enemies will be most happy to take over and run the planet—including ourselves—in their own interest.

Once we get out of our heads the concept of a monolithic and immutable society, some other misconceptions disappear with it. The isolationists are fond of saying that if the country goes to war we shall become fascist and remain so. But this is not necessarily or invariably or even probably true. Great Britain went through four years of a frightful and exhausting con-

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flict in 1914-18 and emerged with her form of government and her civil liberties substantially unimpaired. Only five years after the end of the struggle, a Labor Prime Minister ruled the country with the consent of the House of Commons. France went through the same war, and whatever other criticism may be made of her, she showed far more internal democracy after 1918 than she did before 1914. The United States, which is in many ways the most violently conservative of the great capitalist nations, went through a bad period during and after the war, but this did not endure much beyond 1920, and thereafter we made a remarkable series of gains. Even Germany, which began the war as a monarchy, ended as a liberal republic which, despite the inexperience of the people in self-government, lasted for the better part of a decade. It was finally destroyed, not primarily by internal forces but by the implacable malignancy of the mean-souled French Premier, Poincaré, and the apathy or hostility of Britain and America, which would not lift a finger to give the German Republic a chance for life. In short, whether a country becomes fascist under the stress of war experience depends, first, on how many citizens favored fascism before the war started and second, on how hard and loyally the anti-fascists are willing to fight for the preservation of liberty.

The isolationists have said further that the opposite school has been uncandid in its refusal to face publicly the fact that the United States might through its present policy become embroiled in war. I think this criticism has some merit. No doubt many of those who have favored aid to Britain have done so in the sincere belief that sufficient help given in a short enough time would safeguard this country from the danger of having to fight and thereby prove a preventive of war rather than an incitement to it. Yet it is certainly true that many people have been more cautious in their public utterances than privately. I, for one, believe there is still a good chance that Germany may be defeated without the United States actually going to war. I believe further that a declaration of war now might prove a handicap rather than an aid to the assistance we are giving to Great Britain, Yugoslavia, Greece and China. At the same time, I believe we should either do *everything* necessary to crush Germany or we should have followed a policy of appeasement from the beginning and—which would certainly have resulted—reconciled ourselves to becoming another Denmark. Therefore, I feel that if we find it necessary to convoy merchant ships to ensure their safe passage we should convoy them; if going to war is the only alternative to a world dominated by fascism, we should go to war. For there is one thing, and only one, that is worse than war itself: slavery.

If, however, we make the ghastly sacrifice of our blood and treasure, we must not be tricked and betrayed as we were in 1917. We must know that the forces of democracy are so completely in the ascendant here at home that there is no likelihood of their being dislodged. We must give help to the democrats of England who are also fighting the native fascism of the British Isles. We must demand the publication of war aims and peace terms, both by Great Britain and the United States, but we must feel that once these terms have been published, a miracle has been passed and all is well. We must continue to fight for governments which will carry out these terms or better ones. We must make it clear to a man like Chiang Kai-shek that when we help him to resist Japanese tyranny it is not our purpose to clear the road for Chinese tyranny to take its place; and the same with every other country on our side in the struggle. Nations are not monolithic, but fascism is; I see no reason for making any mental distinction between the attitudes of a man like Hitler and those of British appeasers, Chinese war lords and our own anti-democrats.

This may seem a dark hour for democracy throughout the world; but it is not. On the contrary, we now see that we have in the past lived through a long succession of dark hours when we were too stupid or too naïve to recognize that fact. The anti-democrats have always been with us, in all countries. Indeed, until a few generations ago their rule was almost universally unchallenged. Today the democrats are in a sense fighting with their backs to the wall; but at least, they are fighting; they know each other; they have learned to identify their false friends—like the Communists, who are just the fascists' reserve regiments—and they are learning what are the enemy's weak spots. Harold Laski is fond of quoting the maxim: "It is better to die on your feet than to live on your knees." The one great important fact emerging from the mist that hangs over the world today is the vast and increasing number of people who begin to feel that this maxim is exactly and literally true. And among them there are many like this writer who have counted themselves as haters of war all their lives—and still do.

BRUCE BLIVEN

## 1940

Paint him with rouge and shave the fallen chin.
Arrange the frightened fingers as you can.
Prop him at ease and call the children in:
Attend the pitiful obsequies of Man.

Put out the parlor lights, but let one shine
Above his couch as halo for his head.
Repair to corners and repeat how fine
How grave indeed the cancerous father dead.

Ponder his pride. Resolve the life's deceit.
According to your sorrow weep or yawn.
This kindly legend was a common cheat.
He owned no love. He leaves none. He is gone.

W. G. VAN KEUREN

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# Washington Notes

## Freedom of the Press v. Censorship

THE AMERICAN PRESS has been protecting its Constitution-given freedom from one imaginary threat or another ever since President Roosevelt took office. It has stood in an almost solid phalanx against attempts by the NRA, the Wages-and-Hours Division and the American Newspaper Guild to interfere with its freedom by imposing restrictions on child labor, hours, wages and working conditions in the newspaper industry. Elisha Hanson, counsel to the American Newspaper Publishers' Association, has made freedom of the press synonymous with chiseling in almost every department of the government. Meanwhile, Robert R. McCormick, publisher of The Chicago Tribune, has popularized the phrase as a term of derision the country over.

True, a few publishers have always been ashamed of the organized effort of their brethren to hide their pocketbooks in the pages of the Constitution. David Stern, publisher of The Philadelphia Record, for example, resigned from the ANPA in protest against its pusillanimous bickering over reforms directly affecting the profits of the press. But most of the publishers have contended, following the Hanson-McCormick lead, that it would be an infringement of their rights to apply to them the same rules applied to mere non-publishing employers.

Now that the freedom of the press is indeed limited and threatened with further limitation, the publishers are having a hard time convincing anyone that they aren't just crying wolf again. Moreover, the publishers themselves are split. Some of them are demanding outright censorship; some of them are insisting that this time the wolf is actually getting Little Red Riding Hood.

Arthur Krock, New York Times columnist, always one of the publishing fraternity's most eager defenders, sounded one of the first warnings that the face behind the false teeth is positively not grandma's. Krock has a way of buttressing his warnings with exclusive information from unidentified sources, as when he learned that President Roosevelt was going to meet Adolf Hitler and Benito Mussolini at sea to fix up a world peace and when he learned that Harry Hopkins had talked about taxing and taxing, spending and spending, etc. This time Krock somehow managed to get his information from "members of the inner White House circle." Just how he did this is not quite clear, since those members are not, as a rule, chummy with Krock.

In any event, Krock learned that these White House inner circlers were "saying privately that the time has come to invoke more than military censorship, that criticism has had its full day and national security requires it be impounded until the emergency has passed." Also that speeches by non-interventionist Senators against the lease-lend bill were "among the activities mentioned as fit for suppression." It would be extremely interesting to know what confidant of the President was so indiscreet and how Krock heard such loose talk.

What Krock seemed to be concerned about was a bill to make the Office of Government Reports, under Lowell Mellett, a permanent agency. This office, he indicated, was to set up a censorship system that would effectively silence Senator Burton K. Wheeler and the rest of the isolationists. Mellett had previously assured a Senate committee that he opposed censorship and so did the President. He added that he was authorized to say so on the President's behalf. The Office of Government Reports, he explained, would go on clipping newspapers for the benefit of government officials and answering questions about the government for the benefit of citizens.

Several brushes between the press and the government had preceded Krock's warning and several have followed it. From the facts in each case it has become quite obvious that the censorship, in so far as there is one, has nothing to do with the Office of Government reports. It has to do with the army and navy. So far it has two aspects: first, the War and Navy Departments are withholding from the press information they consider of military importance to potential enemies of the United States; second, the service departments are requesting, but not insisting, that newspapers withhold similar information originating outside the government. The first has come to be called censorship at the source. There is nothing particularly new about it; government departments have always tried to withhold information they considered injurious to them or tried to dress it up in non-injurious handouts. The second is called voluntary censorship. It is of a piece with the system made effective by George Creel during the World War; pressure of public opinion is relied upon for enforcement.

Both systems have been discussed by government officials and representatives of the press at private meetings here in the last few weeks. What came of these meetings was a fairly unanimous agreement that the War and Navy Departments were justified in withholding information that might be of value to the Axis. As to information gained from outside sources, so far there has been nothing but disagreement and misunderstanding. The problem is best illustrated by *l'affaire* Malaya.

The Malaya, with a rent in her side amidships, steamed into New York Harbor on a Sunday afternoon for repairs. At the request of Secretary of the Navy Knox, press associations carried a confidential note to editors asking them to desist from reporting the event or taking pictures of the distressed ship. Photographs and detailed information about the condition of the Malaya, it was explained later, might provide the Nazis with clues about the extent of repairs required and therefore about the length of time she would be laid up. Most newspapers honored the Secretary's request. Not so Captain Joseph Patterson's Daily News, sister publication of The Chicago Tribune. The News published pictures of the ship, of sailors from the Malaya disporting themselves in Times Square and even a view of the crippled man o' war from the office of the German consul general. The Herald Tribune followed with a morgue picture of the Malaya as she looked before battle. Secretary Knox publicly congratulated editors who had complied with his request for their voluntary coöperation. President Roosevelt, going a step farther, cracked The News on the knuckles for its intransigence.

The President said he wanted no censorship—that he was willing to string along with the coöperative majority of the press. He obviously had picked a bad test case, because

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thousands of New Yorkers, including any German agent who happened to be around, saw about as much of the Malaya as the News photograph showed. But the incident indicated the kind of censorship to be expected—something technically voluntary but actually dictated by the military authorities and backed up by public exposure of non-conformists.

The press, divided between its agreement that military secrets should be kept and a vague distrust of anything done by the New Deal, particularly anything smacking of censorship, was left in a pitiable plight. It would have got more pity, however, had it not made a mockery of freedom of the press for the previous eight years.

*Washington* T. R. B.

# Three and One

*El Penitente, Letter to the World, Every Soul Is a Circus, by Martha Graham. Guild Theatre, April 7, 1941.*
*Euripides' The Trojan Women. Cort Theatre, April 8, 1941.*

THE NEW PROGRAM of dance compositions that Miss Martha Graham is repeating, together with the triumphant response from audiences, has been fully reported both as from out of town and at the Guild Theatre—"El Penitente," drawn from the cult of the *penitentes* of the Southwest, is not an imitation of the ritual, but a kind of mystery dance drama; "Letter to the World" deals with the legend rather than the life of Emily Dickinson, using poems or lines from the poems to lead or point the themes, as it were; and "Every Soul Is a Circus" dances some farcical and extravagant fantasy within the soul of a silly woman.

Since I am not a critic of the art of dancing, perhaps the best thing I can do—not staying to comment even on the fine work of her two leading dancers, Mr. Eric Hawkins and Mr. Merce Cunningham—is to set down two cardinal points with regard to this dancer's art and the general theatre art in our midst. The first is that Miss Martha Graham in my opinion is the most important lesson for our theatre that we now have. She has come more and more to exemplify some of our stage's chief needs and to illustrate fine possibilities where it may have deficiencies and gaps. Her work can be studied for its search after stage gesture in the largest sense, some discovered and final movement. And it can be imitated in the perpetual revision and recomposing that she does in her search for the right emphases, and the right pressure to be given them, as if she were feeling for the bones of the work's body, within the flowing articulation of the whole. The point here is not that everything we see Miss Graham do is beautiful or perfect, the point is the scraping back to the design, the lyric and almost harsh resolution to be honest toward it. This projection and this firm statement of the emphases are what the ordinary acting needs to discipline its shiftless inconsequence.

Here endeth the first lesson, and the second is in the matter of conceptions. The conceptions he has feed and qualify the artist's creative work—the artist in general as distinguished from the practiser in any given art, the actor, painter, poet and so on.

Miss Graham has got her technique to the point now where whatever she says, all she says in fact, is said in terms of dance—a technical completeness rare in any art, and so far so good, regardless of what she has to express. But that is not all. An austere and great light has come behind many of her figures and gradations of imagery. In the three persons of the penitente play there is such a sounding out of violent ecstasy, crude and orgastic, mystical and dark, as is not to be found elsewhere in our theatre, though even this element is surpassed at the climaxes when suddenly the movement stops in exhaustion and passionate fulfilment, and the magnificent drawing marks a climax in the visual design. In the course of "Letter to the World," the reading of the poetry was imaginatively contrived, as if it were music calling out the movement's soul. To my mind the range and qualities of tone in the inner and outer experience expressed thus in dancing, the tenderness and freshness of inexhaustible motifs, and the deep statement, inevitable and not falsely romantic, of the dénouement, left many of the lines themselves well behind.

If the Experimental Theatre were already a well established institution, or had brought its standing to the point of authority, there might be more reason in picking at it. This is especially true for a weekly journal like The New Republic, where the news side of the theatre is not the same as it must be in a daily paper. The idea of theatre experiment is an excellent idea; and the contributions in terms of service and money toward this venture have been very notable. I may say that to many readers, though not to all, this tragedy of Euripides' is the greatest of war plays. I may add that Miss Margaret Webster, who directed the production, played the starry role of Andromache, which has a readier dramatic effect and less lengthy declamations than some of the other roles, with dignity and resolution; and that Mr. Frederic Tozere, as Talthybius, had numerous moments when he got over the hurdles of the translation, the ensemble and the general state of mind in the production of the play. Mr. Robert Turney has written a prologue of the Nazi ravage of some modern country, in blank verse relaxed and insistent, to further the play's application to our times.

The translation used for the occasion was the Gilbert Murray. For the markedly dramatic passages in the play, almost any translation would be better. The rhyming might do, conceivably it might; but the folly of so much third-rate poetical volition, figures, tropes, ornaments, inversions and complications in the sense order, all forced by a strong sweetish odor of sheer will on the translator's part, is all but unbearable. The question at the moment is not whether this English version catches something of the quality of the Greek original, but rather the extent to which this loose and lush and cultured melee is speakable on the stage or not. Obviously many of the lines cannot be spoken; the actor has to fight through them, and the clearer he gets them the more musing, futile and bedecked they sound. The lyric of the choral passages comes off rather better, since the dramatic directness and genuineness is not so urgent, and the clichés of the rhythm and the dying fall are so familiar and easy to take.

The Edith Hamilton translation of "The Trojan Women" would have been a wiser choice, though it would have made very little difference, everything considered.

We may as well profit by the occasion, therefore, and

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take from it one esthetic lesson: it is an excellent illustration of the impossibility of transferring one style on to another. Take the role of Hecuba for a single example. Dame Whitty got almost to Calvary with it, scattering analyses, similes and laments behind her as she went—no need to dwell on the subject of her performance. As the Greek play was intended, Hecuba's very long role was a portion of a vast structure of word, sound, movement. It was sustained and varied, now ritual, now dramatic passion, now eloquence. But done naturalistically, the wretched woman sitting there, for instance, with the dead child's body in her arms, the role turns monotonous and repetitive, a mouthy old beldame full of woe-is-me and rambling heroics. All that is wrong; and wrong not sheerly because it is not classic Greek drama, but because everything is thrown out of proportion and key and goes to pieces. "The Trojan Women," if it is to be done in this naturalistic, plain style, would have to be cut afresh and at times rewritten entirely.

I would not, however, advise people to stay away from this production. I would say rather that those who know nothing of Greek drama may get more idea of what it was, and those who know something, more idea of what it wasn't.

STARK YOUNG

# The Admiral and the Lady

THE FILM STORY about the affair between Lord Nelson and Lady Hamilton, called "That Hamilton Woman!" is one of the better historicals simply because it has a human problem as a foundation, and the actors to make it real. History in the movies has become such a smother of wigs, receptions, balls and bombast that drama as a conflict between people falls into one of two patterns: either the lady becomes his wife in an early sequence and spends the rest of the time having faith and fixing him a nice hot drink of cocoa, or she is some innocuous-anonymous who is dangled out in front of him for romantic interest when the serious day's business of a production sequence is over. In either case the romance or the feeling isn't there because there has been no time for or interest in it; it is as hollow and dusty as puffballs in the woods. The main business is with the conflict of known events and with recreating the historical background—our hero, say, is fighting single-handed to open Africa to the slave trade and save the honor of his country. It is a pageant in the simplest terms.

Well, Alexander Korda went all out on the pageant end of the film, with palaces, mobs, rich stuffs and floating ships. He went so far out on time (just over two hours) that entertainment becomes enervation and an expansion of the obvious that is simply slow and poor film-making. But the story selected was fool-proofed by the facts of it, and by the screenplay interpretation of them (Walter Reisch and R. C. Sheriff); and so the two main characters have a chance to win your acquaintance, sympathy and respect. The girl Emma is shown just as a young profligate has finished educating and polishing her into a thing of not only beauty but manners and some ease, and shipped her off to his uncle in Naples, an aging hedonist in the diplomatic service, Lord Hamilton. And Nelson is shown as a young commander at the start of the Napoleonic wars, putting into Naples with orders. The girl is no better than she should be and a lot worse than the Hays office says she's got to be, and her present marriage with Hamilton has been as calculated and cold as a knife; but Nelson is her first thing of the heart, and she turns Naples upside down to get him first men and later (five years later, when he has lost an arm and an eye and is desperate for help) provisioning for his ships. So, naturally. . . .

There is trouble with Lord Hamilton, who is fortunately too cold to be too incautious; there is scandal in the fleet and at home, and finally Nelson is recalled by the Admiralty; and then there is trouble with his wife. But the love affair continues its difficult way and even achieves peace in a cottage for a while, Lord Hamilton having died. And then Trafalgar.

There has been talk and trouble over rightness and wrongness, moral and social codes, whether the lovely and accomplished ex-chambermaid fell or was pushed in the first place, etc. But the implicit moral, I think, is that we have trouble in the world anyway, and that this trouble was worth it. And I think I can guess why this was allowed to go through. In its lengthy exhortations the production is openly a Bundle for Britain. It doesn't matter that any such splashing encomium means good hard money at the box offices of our one big remaining foreign outlet: the flag is being waved in a time of flags, and getting in the way of whatever chump with a flag in his hand is always just a little like dynamite. Parallels here are worked in to the point of open anachronism; England must fight because there are Bad Men in the world; those who don't fight for England are lazy or cowards or blind. It is true that this was truth to all good Englishmen of that time and this; but the truth of fear and fervor is not that of history always, and never that of art when shot hastily from a blunderbuss. Thus we have an interesting example of shifting moral pressures, overstatement of what is half the truth serving to let in that which is wholly true but hitherto not permissible, as if on a pass.

The production from beginning to end is an example of good casting (we can thank Mr. Korda for so much and for his unstinting care in general: for the praise that usually goes to direction, I believe actors and writers to be mainly deserving here). Vivien Leigh is exactly what the part demands, in that she carries the beauty of a portrait over into projected motion. Her management of the difficult part—sharp, tender, commanding and lost—keeps it in a line that might so easily have broken into contradictory fragments; and her scene at the end (with Henry Wilcoxon) is one of the high curtain scenes of theatrical devising partly for her mute place in it. Laurence Olivier would not be thought of as Nelson off-hand, but it is his care to leave any such doubts behind as the film progresses, forsaking good looks for the better expression of tougher things as projected from within. Sara Allgood does a character part in that most blessed of all veteran acting ways: never reaching beyond her line, never throwing it away, never more sham to all the senses than a block of mahogany. Alan Mowbray is as contained and as much a pleasure to watch as always. And the support is nearly flawless.

In production, a curious thing happens. The battle sequence and the rest of the water shots were prepared with such infinite combined skills, care and sums of budget money that they should have grown into the big thing they were intended for. The movies of all the arts cannot go back

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to Alarums Without and seven extras and a grip pounding the dust out of floor boards in a symbol of mighty armies. Yet there could have been the true awe and marvel left in if Trafalgar had just been done with shots of the sea, of listeners, of the coast of England and people waiting, and the sea again, and through the dissolve a rising mumble of broadsides—and then the account, brought to Lady Hamilton in her house with the windows as it is now, the action, the victory and the end of everything. Whereas in the camera and the microphone the word thunder is amplified as firecrackers and the terrible majesty of fleets in action comes out as a confused and largely inactive maneuver of models in a tank. The tank is bigger than any swimming pool; at least a dozen scale models of ships were constructed; the big airplane engines blew up all hell of a wind; and the guns went off in fire and smoke. But on the screen you get action without the belief in it, water without ocean. The models and the tanks are more imposing as actualities.

This brings up a question each production has to settle for itself, and largely by trial and error: how far in this new art must you go in aiding illusion and where must you stop before you cripple it? This battle sequence alone took three weeks of shooting and had a reported budget of $150,000. They built more than a dozen ships, and the two largest at least were so sea-kindly and spacious that they floated in trim and had each a man below-decks to load and fire their tiers of cannon—twelve-to-fifteen-foot models with fighting tops over your head, every eye splice worked out and every jigger with its right sheaves and strands, the rigging in shipshape order, even the planking shown. Two of them are still there in the scene dock, built in the studio for a single picture and not replaceable at much under $15,000 each, and the most awesome examples of complete scale reconstruction I've ever seen. Yet once the perspective and lighting were shifted to make them real, reality got lost somewhere, and you will see them in picture action like toys in the bathtub—except that when you love a toy, you endow it with imagination, and this is one mystery cameras may not be set to capture. The whole subject needs study and genius—and particularly genius, which will neither scorn the magnificent advantages of studio properties nor blunder into forgetting that the whole may best be brought into focus by the selection and grouping of any two or three of its parts. OTIS FERGUSON

# The Literary Bandwagon

*Compiled by E. W.*

### The Art of the Blurbist

This new novel by —— will appeal alike to those who, sated with time-worn plots, want something fresh in their fiction; and to those who are devotees of the unusual in psychology. The plot is distinctly news; every literary critic who has commented on the book, has declared that he has never read the plot before.

This is a true story, vital, human and intensely interesting, of a woman's physical and spiritual rejuvenation brought about by her hospitality to birds.

"The Prickly Pear" describes Nicholas Tappen, competent at his job, but tangled in his own emotions. Even more, it tells the story of the three women who complicated his world. . . . The first woman is Ruth, who could not reconcile herself to being both a wife and an interior decorator.

### The Human Fly

The distinction of ——'s criticism, unusual enough in our age of confusion, has been to keep his eye, separately and collectively, on both objects, the objects being life and literature. – *From a review by Peter Munro Jack in The New York Times.*

### One Great Artist to Another

Magnificent—done with the sure touch of a Joshua Reynolds or a Goya. – *Kenneth Roberts on H. M. Pulham, Esquire, by J. P. Marquand.*

### Better Stick to Your Story

The real headache comes when you start picking the books to give to others. Unless the Yuletide spirit overcomes your sadism you are likely to think of what they ought to read, not what they want to. To check this impulse observe the golden rule of never buying for others the books you think you should have read yourself. That, unfortunately, eliminates most of the classics and stops me from recommending my favorite book list as a basic guide for Christmas shopping. I hope the publishers of the Modern Library and the Everyman editions—not to mention the publishers of "How to Read a Book"—will forgive me for breaking down and telling the truth just this once. – *Mortimer J. Adler in the Christmas Book Section of The Chicago Daily News.*

### What About Gargantua?

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# Correspondence

## Disc Harrow for Plow

SIR: I believe your readers will be interested in the possibilities inherent in recent developments in our knowledge of that commonplace stuff out of which our food originates—the soil.

For years a major effort of investigators into soil matters has been devoted to finding ways to make the water which falls as rain run into the soil instead of running off into the streams. Results haven't been very good. It is questionable whether actual progress has been made when the entire area of farm land in the country is considered.

The natural means by which water gets into the soil is revealed by what might be called an ant's-eye view of the soil. A soil which takes in most of the rainfall will be found to have a lot of stuff in the surface which is like a honeycomb in structure. Water is drawn into this spongelike material just as if it were blotting paper; and, if there is much of this stuff in the surface of the soil, little water will run off. On the other hand, soils which have little of this honeycomb material in the sur-

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face do not take water in very rapidly, for in such soils the water must force its way in *between* the microscopic crystals of rock of which the soil is made. Naturally, it is easier for the water to be literally pulled into the highly absorbent honeycomb material than for it to worm its way in between the solid mass of tiny rock crystals.

The spongelike material, as the reader may have guessed, is just the partially decayed leaves, stems, roots, stalks, pith, etc., which remain on or in the soil as a residue from things which have lived on it before. The scientists lump the whole mass of such material as "organic matter," and it is always of honeycomb structure. For many years it has been known that soils had entirely too little of this absorbent material, and that they must have more in order to drink in the rain as it falls, yet there seemed to be no way effectively to increase the amount that would be retained in the soil.

Finally, somebody decided to try a direct method. He simply worked into the soil a crop of tall rye—cutting it into the soil with an old and well known farm tool, a disc harrow, instead of sandwiching it in as is ordinarily done with a plow. So pronounced was the effect on the crops which were planted immediately that they grew much as they would have been expected to grow if they had been liberally irrigated; for by this process the surface was so filled with absorbent organic matter that the water was literally "piped" into the soil as it fell.

Application of this method by farmers generally will have profound effects in ways not connected with farms. With more water taken into the soil where it falls, naturally, less can run away to cause floods in the lower valleys of the streams; there will be fewer and less violent freshets in the creeks and rivers; there will be less muddy water; the streams will run more uniformly throughout the summer, so the fishing will be better; and wild life will find better living conditions. The farmer will profit directly from the change and his urban friends will enjoy a better water supply, better hunting and fishing, and, conceivably, cheaper food.

Not all of the experiment stations have begun to give out information about this development. Readers who are interested might inquire of their county agricultural agent, or of the experiment station in their state.

I would be glad to answer letters addressed to me at 427 Winter Street, Elyria, Ohio.

*Elyria, Ohio* E. H. FAULKNER

## Intelligence and Genius

SIR: Bruce Bliven says that intelligence tests have been the subject of a good deal of controversy, with which he need not concern himself ("Genius: Its Cause and Care," The New Republic, March 17). That controversy is on the subject of the validity of the tests themselves. Since his article accepts the results of the tests, it certainly is a matter of concern whether those results are valid or not. A footnote says the article is based on interviews with a number of leading research experts in the United States. He mentions only Dr. Terman and Dr. Miles, both on the same side in the controversy and both with a vested interest in the subject.

That some people are brighter than others is obvious. That there is much waste of high intelligence is also obvious. In expounding the obvious, Mr. Bliven has given to the whole matter of intelligence testing an importance it does not have in scientific circles. As a teacher, I am much concerned by such ready acceptance of the work of Dr. Terman. In the schools the findings of such workers in "educational" psychology is used frequently for very undemocratic purposes. In one local of the American Federation of Teachers, a study of the IQ controversy was made last year. It suggested that disinterested scientists are not so sanguine about the IQ, its validity and its constancy, as Mr. Bliven seems to be. I think Mr. Bliven's article needs a supplement in in which the opinions of others than Dr. Terman and Dr. Miles are voiced.

*Baltimore, Md.* UNA CORBETT

SIR: It seems incredible that Mr. Bliven would write his study on genius as though Freud had never lived and as though his, Adler's and Jung's theories had no bearing whatsoever on this very complex and intricate problem of genius. Has Mr. Bliven ever stopped to think what may have been the IQ of Poe or Baudelaire or Hindemith or Chagall? Has he ever read Thomas Mann's magnificent essays and short stories dealing with that peculiar relationship between genius and criminal ("Felix Krull" for instance)?

How would the characteristics: kind, trustworthy, conscientious, persistent, etc., that Mr. Bliven quotes from Dr. Miles as symptoms of genius, fit such men as van Gogh, Wagner, Gauguin or Rimbaud? And where would Mr. Bliven place that fellow Hitler?

Genius is something much less simple and ordinary (yes, ordinary) than Mr. Bliven wants to make his readers believe.

*San Francisco, Calif.* HEINZ BERGGRUEN

SIR: All that about IQ's is nonsense. The science is no science. Actually Bruce Bliven means that with others he has agreed upon a method, which he calls a scientific method, just as the astrologers built up what they considered a science of astrology. The intelligence test overlooks entirely the faculty of the will.

*Newtown, Pa.* JOSEPH C. HARVEY

[The question of the efficiency of the intelligence tests is a highly technical one on which laymen—including journalists—are hardly competent to pass judgment. In my article on genius I was careful to point out that there are various schools of thought and to confine my observations to matters on which the overwhelming majority on both sides of the fence are in agreement. Nearly all scientists concede that the tests do measure some quality and that this correlates with achievement outside the testing room. I don't see that it matters whether you call this "intelligence" or something else. – B. B.]

## No Halo for Miss Gilson

SIR: I am very appreciative of the complimentary things Professor Douglas said about my book, "What's Past Is Prologue," in your issue of March 24. One of the compliments, however, I must disclaim in fairness to the Joseph and Feiss Company. "But try as Miss Gilson might," says Mr. Douglas, "she could never induce her associates to sign up with the Amalgamated Clothing Workers." Much as it would flatter my ego to go down into history as a missionary in darkest industry, I cannot honestly wear a halo. I tried to make clear why we were not eager to have our plant organized in the period when we were installing scientific management. I also tried to make clear that we permitted no overt or covert discrimination against members of the Amalgamated, that we encouraged attendance at union meetings so that workers would have no hesitancy in accepting opportunities to hear all viewpoints, and that we constantly maintained an open door to Amalgamated officials who wished to observe our methods of manufacturing and administration. I, together with other of our executives, was accumulating new viewpoints and a wider outlook from extended contacts with labor officials, from experience and added knowledge of social and economic developments both inside and outside of our plant. I can't therefore accept any kudos for converting a group some of whom were already moving along with the changing times.

MARY B. GILSON

*Chicago, Ill.*

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## Tax on Land

SIR: The splendid article by Walter E. Packard, "The Central Valley Project" (The New Republic, March 24) has posed some economic and social questions that can be successfully met by orderly and democratic process, but only if those who are willing to give more than mere lip-service to economic freedom actively lend a hand.

Mr. Packard's article is a ringing challenge to democracy. He says, "Most of the land is held by large corporations, or absentee owners, who hope for a rise in land values from the development." On this precise point, President Roosevelt in a letter written to Senator Bone on February 10, 1937, said: "I know that you will agree with me that it is unthinkable that real-estate profits should accrue to private individuals solely because of this great government work. Therefore, in my judgment, construction of the high dam [Grand Coulee] should be dependent on the elimination of private profits, speculative or otherwise, which would result from this proposed action by the federal government."

In the recent House Hearings on Interstate Migration (Part 4) on page 1575, E. B. Debler, Hydraulic Engineer, United States Bureau of Reclamation, testifies: "These future developments (such as Central Valley, Columbia Basin and similar projects) will create property values of $16,000,000,000." While much of those values will be the product of labor and private capital, it will be money from the United States Treasury that builds the great irrigation, flood-control, navigation and power dams and main canals bringing the water to vast areas now barren and uninhabited. Those major public improvement works are either going to be paid for by those receiving the benefits, or else the full $16,000,000,000 of new property values must inevitably flow into the pockets of those who hold legal title to the land.

Oftener than not such title holders are absentees, who grabbed the land believing that democracy is too easygoing to insist that the values in these lands should be taxed up to virtually the full rental value.

The power to tax is also the power to create equality of opportunity.

*San Francisco, Calif.* J. RUPERT MASON

## Letter from England

[The following is an extract from a private letter just received in New York. – THE EDITORS]

We are going through the usual period of March depression here, due largely perhaps to the weather and to the fact that there has been a good deal of illness—nothing serious, thank heaven, but fairly widespread. Everyone seems to be a little below par: you know the effect that has. Then it is impossible—utterly impossible—to get a nurse, and there are so few doctors and those few are so overworked that it is sometimes three days before a patient can be visited at all. This has a bad pyschological effect and the prospect of another winter is really alarming. E——, being a reception area, has almost doubled its population. Instead of the social services being increased correspondingly, the trained personnel has actually been diminished. You can imagine the complications. It is the same in regard to food. E—— is still allotted food according to the pre-war census, and the poor housewife is feeling more and more harassed in her effort to keep things going [omission by censor] not so much in E—— as in [omission by censor]. Then more and more men are being called up, so that it is hard to keep existing structures together.

. . . Many people are giving up their homes partly because they can no longer afford them and partly because no help is available. The leveling-down process is taking place very quickly and the standard of living is falling. There is another factor too which adds to the general depression, and that is in the sense that one cannot grapple with all that needs to be done: the problems are too big. Even in my small sphere I can only deal with a tiny fraction of all that I feel I should be doing. Well, there it is—one side of the picture, and of course I haven't mentioned the personal tragedies and anxieties that cut still deeper and are hard to throw off. And over everything hangs a cloud of uncertainty and apprehension about the war itself.

There is a sense of tragedy about this war—I seem to find it everywhere—a sense of shame that our civilization has come to this. Perhaps that is one reason why we can fight without hate, which in itself is remarkable. But because we can't hate neither can we believe that we have embarked on a great crusade. No overpowering emotion carries us forward—it's just a grim determination to defend the values we cherish. I suppose in that sense it is the most civilized war that has ever been fought by Britain and, for that reason, the hardest.

*Somewhere in England* D. W.

## Book-Burning in Los Angeles

SIR: Yes, it can happen here. Professor Rugg's books have been withdrawn from the Los Angeles schools. I was unable even to draw a copy from the school library. I am wondering when the burning of the books will take place. Will the National Association of Manufacturers officiate? If new books sponsored by the NAM are purchased for the well-being of us all, will the NAM be kind enough to purchase them, or will the bill be footed by the taxpayer?

ONE TAXPAYER

*Altadena, Calif.*

## *From The New Republic Mail Bag*

It seems that the Detroit Junior Chamber of Commerce decided to put on a personality-sales campaign and got Dale Carnegie, the friend-maker, to come out and lecture at the Book Cadillac Hotel. Part of the publicity campaign was to be a visit to Henry Ford, for the purpose of presenting him with the two-millionth copy of "How to Win Friends and Influence People." Carnegie made the call but found Mr. Ford "very busy." At lunch with K. T. Keller of Chrysler Motors a couple of hours later, at the time 80,000 were milling about the River Rouge plant, Carnegie solemnly recited the story. "This would be a hell of a good day to call him up and read the book to him over the phone," said Keller. Paul Foley, Grosse Point, Michigan, sends us this story.

Edward Caffery, New York City, is an Irishman who is ready to begin fighting. "With damned little patience I am waiting the day when Ireland and the United States begin to do their duty to themselves; when the Irish grant naval bases to England and when we realize that we must *deliver* the weapons to those who are fighting our battles. Can't we realize that if the British fleet, under the Churchill government, is eliminated, we shall be economically hogtied? Senator Wheeler is dead right when he says that if this is our war we should fight it. When he says it is not our war he is tragically mistaken."

Dorothy P. Hill, Buffalo, New York, director of the Summer Institute for Social Progress, which will be held at Wellesley College, July 5 to 19, invites "men and women of all vocations who are interested in the foreign policy of the United States and in efforts to solve our chief domestic problems," to participate. No age limits or academic qualifications needed. For information write to G. L. Osgood, secretary, 14 West Elm Avenue, Wollaston, Massachusetts.

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# Mr. Churchill Speaks

BEFORE THIS WAR, Winston Churchill was often called Cassandra, but the comparison was hardly exact. Cassandra had been endowed with the gift of true prophecy by Apollo, in return for a promise that handsome young women are often asked to make. When she refused to carry out her part of the bargain, the god revenged himself by decreeing that not one of her prophecies should be heeded. She foretold the Trojan War and the fall of the city, and nobody bothered to listen. Churchill also foretold dire misfortunes for his people, and the present volume of his speeches,[1] including those he made from May, 1938, to February, 1941, shows that he had Cassandra's gift for true prophecy. But unlike her, he used all the wiles of Apollo in order to make himself heard. He argued, he cajoled, he asked searching questions, he revealed facts that everybody else was hoping to disregard, yet at the same time he tried not to wound the vanity of his opponents; he wanted to make it easy for them to change their policies. Eventually they did change them; they followed Churchill's advice item by item. The tragedy was that they followed it half-heartedly and almost always too late.

After the invasion of Poland, Churchill became a responsible member of the War Cabinet, a position that Cassandra never held in Troy. We can assume that he did not lose his gift of foresight, but for the moment he had to keep it hidden and loyally execute the policies of Neville Chamberlain. The result was that his public remarks for the next eight months had an air of complacency that was totally unjustified by the extent of the British war effort. It was not until he became Prime Minister, on May 10, 1940, that his speeches revealed the seriousness of the situation. Since then, they have been a surprisingly complete and candid history of the war from the British point of view, besides being a means of uniting the nation for always greater efforts. I don't like to use superlatives, but Churchill has earned the right to be called the best public speaker in the world today.

Others better qualified will use the present volume as an opportunity to analyze his policies of war and peace; in essence they are simple enough, being aimed at the one goal of preserving Britain and her empire. My own impulse is to make a few comments on his manner of writing. Churchill is one of the few professional authors who have ever been chosen to rule a great nation. He not only makes laws for his people but writes their songs as well, in the sense that his speeches are battle cries, dirges for the fallen and hymns of victory. Since his style reflects and helps to shape the mind of the Englishman at war, it is a subject of more than literary interest.

One notes first of all that the language he uses is spoken English, as opposed to the literary jargon of the universities and the technical jargon of statesmen. Almost all the memorable phrases that he has put into circulation are expressed in the simplest possible words: "Never in the field of human conflict was so much owed by so many to so few."—". . . if necessary for years, and if necessary alone."—"We shall go on to the end . . . we shall fight on the beaches, we shall fight on the landing grounds, we shall fight in the fields and in the streets, we shall fight in the hills; we shall never surrender." Phrases like this show by their choice of words a hatred of pedantry and a willingness to call disagreeable things by their common names. Sometimes Churchill blunders into the false simplicity of Hemingway's early style at its worst: "We tried again and again to prevent this war, and for the sake of peace we put up with a lot of things happening that ought not to have happened." More often the simplicity is true and unaffected, as in the famous statement to Parliament from which the title of this book is taken: "I have nothing to offer but blood, toil, tears and sweat."

A second characteristic of his writing is the continual use of irony, often in the form of understatement. This rhetorical device is safe to use only in a society so unified that its members understand one another even when they are saying less than half of what they mean. Churchill, for example, introduced what was in 1939 probably the largest naval budget in history by saying, "I come before the House on behalf of the navy to ask for a few men, some ships and a little money." The Reichstag might have taken him at his word. Sometimes the effect of his understatement depends on an elaborate build-up: "If after all his boasting and blood-curdling threats and lurid accounts trumpeted round the world of the damage he has inflicted"—and so on for several lines—"if after all this his whole air onslaught were forced after a while tamely to peter out, the Führer's reputation for veracity might be seriously impugned." More often the point is simply made: "There is a general curiosity in the British fleet to find out whether the Italians are up to the level they were at in the last war or whether they have fallen off at all." This was said on June 18, 1940, eight days after Italy had declared war and one day after Pétain had sued for peace. Even when everything seems hopeless, Churchill has a vitality that bursts forth in sanguinary humor. "In the brown hours, when baffling news comes, and disappointing news, I always turn for refreshment to the reports of the German wireless."

A third characteristic is his sense of English history as a continuing process, a book that the living nation is helping to write. The heroes of the English past are always standing at his elbow. "We must regard the next week or so," he says, "as a very important period in our history. It ranks with the days when the Spanish Armada was approaching the Channel, and Drake was finishing his game of bowls." And British history extends for him into the distant future. "Let us therefore brace ourselves to our duties," he said on that same June 18, "and so bear ourselves that, if the British Empire and its Commonwealth last for a thousand years, men will still say, 'This was their finest hour.'"

Lacking almost entirely from these speeches is a picture of the world that Churchill would like to see after the war. One can take for granted that England, old England, would play a great part in it. He is, after all, an English Tory, head of the party, and distinguished from Tory colleagues like the late Mr. Chamberlain chiefly by the fact that he has always and instinctively put national interests above class interests. This, however, is more than a minor difference. If it seems to Churchill that national interests require a drastic remodeling of society to the profit

[1] Blood, Sweat and Tears, by Winston S. Churchill. New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons. 472 pages. $3.

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of the broad masses, he will end by supporting the necessary measures. Meanwhile his war aims, as opposed to his peace aims, are more directly stated in this volume of speeches than I had expected before reading them. The first aim is victory—"victory at all costs, victory in spite of all terror, victory however long and hard the road may be." The second and more questionable aim is the carrying out of all British pledges to the conquered nations of Europe. "We abate nothing of our just demands; not one jot or tittle do we recede. Czechs, Poles, Norwegians, Dutch, Belgians have joined their cause to our own. All these shall be restored." He neglects to say whether all shall be restored to full economic anarchy.

His third and last point—mentioned as frequently since the war began as was the German danger in his earlier speeches—is the need for the closest coöperation with the United States. In connection with other statements, one passage that was widely quoted in this country acquires a more definite meaning. He has been saying that the British Empire and the United States "will have to be somewhat mixed up together in some of their affairs. . . . For my part," he continues, "looking out upon the future, I do not view the process with any misgivings. . . . Like the Mississippi, it just keeps rolling along. Let it roll. Let it roll on full flood, inexorable, irresistible, benignant, to broader lands and better days." Is it too much to say that these words are a direct invitation to join with Britain in winning the war and writing the peace and later enforcing it by something like a Federal Union?

MALCOLM COWLEY

# Books in Review

## A Prince of India

"TOWARD FREEDOM"[1] has a double meaning. It is the story of Jawaharlal Nehru's personal liberation, and also the history of the movement for the freedom of India. In the first aspect it tells how a youth with a tendency toward estheticism and a soft life, so shy that he rarely spoke in the little circle of Indian students at Oxford, the scion of a Brahman family born to riches and privilege among hereditary vested interests, progressed to become the friend of his people, ready to endure every hardship and danger for them; a leader whose voice stirred thousands. In this personal history the activities of the public man are again and again interrupted by prison sentences. Of twenty-one years of struggle, more than half are spent in confinement, often solitary. That these were periods of growth, contributing to the formation of a character of singular honesty, reasonableness, tolerance and distinction, is obvious. To one such period we owe this autobiography. The urge to review what had happened in India since he first took part in public affairs seized Nehru in Dehra jail. "How far had we been right in what we had done? How far wrong? . . . I wanted as far as possible to think straight, and I imagined that this review of the past might help me to do so."

Both the active and the passive phases of Nehru's life are concerned with public service. This service, like Gandhi's, like Nehru's own father's, was called forth by the shocking massacre of the Jallianwala Bagh, when the British commander, General Dyer, ordered his troops to shoot murderously into a great crowd of men, women and children, helplessly massed within stone walls. The same Dyer compelled his prisoners to crawl on their bellies through the dust of a street in Amritsar. Jawaharlal Nehru was then thirty, not yet emancipated from the subjection to alien rule which made India the passive victim of British atrocities. Amritsar was the first decisive step toward freedom, taken under compulsion, for Nehru and for India.

[1] Toward Freedom: The Autobiography of Jawaharlal Nehru. New York: The John Day Company. 462 pages. $4.

It was not enough for Nehru to free himself. He saw that it was not prisons and murder that constituted the real tragedy of India's subservience. With clear insight he notes how the British government sets one faith in India over against another, Moslem against Hindu, by the communalism which is at bottom nothing but a demand for jobs, "how the official and service atmosphere drew the intellectual classes of Indians away from the masses of their own people," how "a country-house" system, in which the British were the owners and Indians the menials, tended to consign the latter to a servants' hall, with a below-stairs hierarchy from butler to sweeper, in which a whole people came to have the soul of a servant. It was from the deterioration of character which he saw in his contemporaries that Jawaharlal Nehru saved himself by ten years of indignant activity and ten years in prison.

Not only the servants, but the masters suffer, morally and intellectually, from this unnatural relation of social bondage. For mental astigmatism we find Lord Lytton quoted as saying that "the government of India was far more representative of India as a whole than the Congress politicians. The government of India was able to speak in the name of officials, the army, the police, the princes, the fighting regiments and both Moslems and Hindus." As for moral degradation, one quality on which the masters pride themselves seems to fade out in their dealings with servants. It is easy to believe that it is not in their habitual character of honest Englishmen that MacDonald, Irwin and Hoare have spoken to India. In connection with the trial of Nehru and two others at Nabha, "apparently three were not enough for a conspiracy, and so a fourth man, who had absolutely nothing to do with us, was arrested and put on his trial with us." This is exactly the trick worked in the trial of Indian revolutionists in San Francisco in 1917, when Sir George Denham, chief of the Indian Criminal Investigation, appeared with six men released from Indian prisons, utterly unknown to the accused, for the purpose of testifying against them in a conspiracy case.

A particular interest of Nehru's story lies in his relation to Gandhi and his study of the Mahatma's extraordinary

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personality. The two men illustrate the fundamental opposition of East and West. The basis of Gandhi's life is religion; in which Nehru sees an obstacle to India's progress. For Gandhi non-violence is a moral equivalent of war, a principle of universal application. For Nehru it is a political weapon. For Gandhi *satyagraha*, or civil disobedience, was the practical test of the ethical principle. Could the people stand firm under the blows of the British *lathis* which they had invoked? When they failed in this test, and at the village of Chauri Chaura retaliated by setting fire to the police station, Gandhi abruptly called off *satyagraha*, for which 30,000 persons were in prison, and by which the government was nearly paralyzed. There was consternation on the part of Nehru and the leaders, and relief on the part of the government, which it employed by sending Gandhi to prison.

This was only one of several instances in which Gandhi, for some religious scruple, sentenced himself to death or suspended the movement of which he had become the symbol. The release of the Untouchables from their curse seemed to him more important than the independence of India. In 1933 he began fasting because the government refused to let him continue his *Harijan* work from prison and was released when very near to death. In 1934 he declared that the terrible earthquake which destroyed Monghyr was a punishment for the sin of untouchability. In that year he again suspended civil resistance because he learned that Nehru in prison was "reluctant to perform the full prison task, preferring his private studies to the allotted task." Nehru granted Gandhi's right to suspend civil resistance, "but the reason he had given seemed to me an insult to intelligence and an amazing performance for a leader of a national movement." This was the breaking point. "With a stab of pain, I felt that the cords of allegiance that had bound me to him for many years had snapped."

To Nehru, and indeed to himself, Gandhi remained a mystery. "There was something unknown about him which in spite of the closest association for fourteen years, I could not understand. . . . He admitted the presence of this unknown element in him, and said that he himself could not answer for it or foretell what it might lead to." The direction of a political movement by guesswork became abhorrent to Nehru's practical mind. Gandhi's glorification of poverty and his support of the landlord system which enforced it were insufferable. Gandhi proposed to alter social conditions by conversion, not compulsion; but to Nehru, some of Gandhi's "methods of conversion are not far from courteous and considerate compulsion." In other words, Gandhi exercises the same moral tyranny which Jane Addams saw in Tolstoy. Yet with this fundamental difference in character and outlook Nehru defends Gandhi from those of the Left who see in him only an arch-reactionary. He recognizes in Gandhi the very spirit of India, "that ancient and tortured land." For India he has done what no man has ever done for a land so immense and so diverse. "He has instilled courage and manhood in her people, and discipline and endurance, and the power of joyful sacrifice for a cause, and, with all his humility, pride. . . . With all his horror of violence he has told us that 'cowardice is a thing even more hateful than violence.' "

Jawaharlal Nehru stands apart not only from Gandhi but from many others of his associates. He knows that the movement for independence is largely one of bourgeois nationalism. In his view, political freedom will bring a large measure of social freedom also. Nationalism is a disease which will pass with independence, and will open the way to the distribution of land and coöperation in industry, as well as the abolition of untouchability. Nehru is a modern man by education and culture, a Socialist of modified Marxian tenets, who would frankly prefer communism to fascism. But he remains a divided spirit. While Gandhi is all India, Nehru speaks of himself as "a queer mixture of the East and the West, out of place everywhere, at home nowhere." A product of Harrow, Oxford and London, with European associations, he yet carries "racial memories of a hundred generations of Brahmans. I cannot get rid of either that past inheritance or my recent acquisitions. They are both part of me and though they help me in both the East and the West, they also create in me a feeling of spiritual loneliness not only in public activities but in life itself. I am a stranger and alien in the West. I cannot be of it. But in my own country also, sometimes, I have an exile's feeling." His is the dilemma of Djabal in "The Return of the Druises":

> I with my Arab instinct thwarted ever
> By my Frank policy—and with in turn
> My Frank brain thwarted by my Arab heart.

Jawaharlal Nehru is again in prison, this time for opposing the participation of India in the war for the British Empire. It is obvious that India could not do this without abandoning the self-respect which has been so patiently built up by the efforts of both Gandhi and Nehru. The treatment of India by Churchill, Amery, Linlithgow, is the one great obstacle for America to taking at face value their pledged devotion to democracy. They ignore the great opportunity to give effect to their professions, and Jawaharlal Nehru remains in prison to testify against them before the public opinion of the world.

ROBERT MORSS LOVETT

# The Careful Rapture

*Poems, by Yvor Winters. Los Altos, California: The Gyroscope Press. 56 pages. No price, distributed privately.*

WHEN Jonson remarked, of Shakespeare's never having blotted a line, that he wished to God he had blotted a thousand, he was indicating, perhaps deliberately, the two archtypes of poet, the two sorts of poet who, between them, have divided the realm of man's consciousness from the childhood of the race down to the present day. He must have been aware, too, that in his great rival and himself the two types were almost perfectly embodied. Not quite: one could easily enough, for another purpose, summon up the exceptions. But mainly it is true: for Jonson is the craftsman, the artist the expert manipulator, the lapidary, the man of good sense, the carver and maker, the worker from outside in; whereas Shakespeare, working rather from the inside out, reckless, prodigal, uncontrolled, was a kind of magnificent debauchee of poetry, as much ridden by his *daimon* as riding it. Not for the artist the "first fine *careless* rapture"—that one word careless is enough, for him, to condemn it. No, the mark of the artist, or the would-be artist, is always precisely to be seen in his

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constant care, not to say his caution. The *curiosa felicitas* is of course what he aims at—the *careful* felicity; it is a kind of excellent coolness, the argentine soberly preferred to the aureate; there must not be too much heat; and instead, a satisfying suggestion as of an everywhere extending, and always reasoned, control.

Admirable aims, without any question; and it can be said flatly that it is the poets of this line who keep poetry in order. These—like Matthew and Waldo, in Mr. Eliot's poem—are the army of unalterable law. But just the same, along with all this excellent control, and this muscular and sustaining discipline (qualities too little esteemed by Americans), often goes too a perhaps depressing sense of limits, and no less limiting and limited because deliberate. Particularly is this true of the scholar-poet—Matthew Arnold is of course the best example—for here the limits are precise and express. The discipline, whether of form or idea, is obvious enough, and it is good as far as it goes; at its best, it produces a sort of negative purity, a mild decorousness: it is thoughtful, and it tries to be exact. The trouble with it is that it cannot understand or accept exuberance, either in image or word, that it is mortally afraid of *sound*, with all its prosodic and linguistic implications, and that above all it dares not try for intensity or simplicity because it imagines these to be sentimental. In fact, it really tends to avoid the properly "poetic" field, which it considers a little too vulgar and easy, and to employ rather the method of the essay, the critical essay. Statement, analysis, conclusion—the method, it will be seen, is anti-orgastic in the extreme. The poet is wholly safe, he runs no risk of embarrassment.

And Mr. Ivor Winters is a good specimen of this kind of poet, all complete, too, with his defensive argument. In the notes to his "Poems," explicitly and perhaps a shade pretentiously, he makes it quite clear that he avoids and dislikes that quality in poetry which most people would call magic. That is not what Mr. Winters calls it—he prefers to call it "de-intellectualized sensibility." How, exactly, does one de-intellectualize sensibility? And can the process be reversed? One wonders! Mr. Winters describes one of his poems, "Nocturne," as "another example of material cohering by virtue of feeling and rhythmic structure, and very little by virtue of intelligible theme. If a poem of this sort were to be regarded as a true portrait of a state of mind, it would indicate madness on the part of the author; it is of course a literary method by means of which certain elements of consciousness are isolated arbitrarily, as by a sieve. Unfortunately as a spiritual exercise, this sort of thing can hardly lead toward intelligence . . ." and so on.

Well, the truth is one hardly likes to think of poetry as a spiritual "exercise," nor does one much wonder, when reading a poem, whether it will lead toward intelligence, though indeed in some instances it may. The whole attitude here strikes one as fundamentally wrong, and as conceptually withering, if only because it begins with so airy an exorcism of the very *voice* of poetry. "Nocturne," the little poem of which Mr. Winters disapproves, is in point of fact not a particularly good poem, since it lacks form; but it is poetic, because it has plenty of feeling-tone, or affect; and it is certainly not noticeably inferior to those later poems which Mr. Winters prefers because they have an "idea." What are these precious ideas? Without explanatory notes, they do not emerge: with them, they seem a little arbitrary, and of no great significance. When these later poems are effective—as for instance "Sonnet to the Moon," "A Vision," "The Journey," "Sir Gawaine and the Green Night"—they are effective because they have *poetic* meaning, not because on chemical analysis they render up some little surd of a concept. And no amount of concept, no amount of scholarly care or caution, can replace that sort of poetic meaning which is the genius of language and the genius of awareness in creative synthesis. This kind of meaning embraces all others.

CONRAD AIKEN

# Long Rifle and Land Deed

*And Still the Waters Run, by Angie Debo. Princeton University Press. 417 pages. $4.*
*Yellow Wolf: His Own Story, by L. V. McWhorter. Caldwell, Idaho: Caxton Printers. 324 pages. $3.50.*

THESE TWO BOOKS are complementary the way books on famine and plague would be complementary: they give you the opportunity to watch one grisly process step in and take over where the other left off. Mr. McWhorter's book is a first-person account of America's last major Indian campaign, the Nez Perce War of 1877. Miss Debo's book is a history of the fantastic expropriation and spoliation of Oklahoma's Five Civilized Tribes from the end of the last century to the present. Together, they make a thoroughly documented and extremely ugly picture of the tragic side to the westward march of American civilization, no less pitiful because of its historical inevitability and economic necessity. The white settlers of Tasmania reduced the problem of expropriating their aboriginal Negroes to its simplest aspect: they marched 3,000 armed men in extended order from one tip of the island to the other and slaughtered every native. In all probability, it was the enormous area of America rather than any milksop humanitarianism that prevented our own settlers from pursuing any such quick and efficient course, and forced them to depend on such relatively slower means as the treaty, the Act of Congress and the cavalry troop. Anyone anxious to know why Nazism is making such rapid progress among American Indians need go no further than these two books.

"Yellow Wolf: His Own Story" is, as its name suggests, the simple and deeply moving reminiscences of an Indian. Yellow Wolf was a brave of the Nez Perces, a primitive, independent tribe who fished their rivers and rode their plains after bison, fought the dreaded Sioux and Blackfeet on occasion, and asked no more of the white man than to be left alone. Under Chief Joseph, a small band of them (never more than two hundred) resisted efforts to drive them off their land onto a reservation, rose against their oppressors, retreated hundreds of miles across three states while fighting off detachment after detachment of federal troops many times their number, and were finally betrayed in their treaty of peace and exiled. Yellow Wolf, who fought through the entire campaign, narrates his story to Mr. McWhorter with passion, honesty and skill. His description of the "civilized" soldiers fighting the "savage" Indians by massacring their noncombatant women and children cannot easily be forgotten, even in this day of mass slaughter.

Miss Debo's book, as her preface states, describes the

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period of expropriation following the Indian Wars, "when the long rifle of the frontiersman was displaced by the legislative enactment and court decree of the legal exploiter, and the lease, mortgage and deed of the land shark." She has chosen to deal with the so-called Five Civilized Tribes of Oklahoma—the Cherokees, Choctaws, Chickasaws, Creeks and Seminoles—because of the fabulous value of their oil-impregnated lands and the rapidity and extent of the plunder. The irony of this choice lies in the fact that before they were pauperized and degraded the Five Tribes were among the most advanced Indians on the continent, with a high degree of culture and education, constitutional republican governments, a highly developed communal economy and a long history of peace and progress. Within a few years they were forced to abandon their tribal governments for United States citizenship and discard their communal ownership for individual holdings, which were then taken from them by every means from direct government cession to forgery, fraud, kidnaping and murder.

Miss Debo chronicles the whole frenzied period in merciless detail, stripping its legal trappings to reveal a process no less brutal and bloody than the earlier wars, with the added refinement that peaceful robbery deprived the Indian of even the futile choice of armed resistance. Her account of the Indian's ironic situation today is heartbreaking: with nothing left to steal, local pressure groups have ceased agitating against measures for Indian welfare; the government now has a free hand and is finally aware of the wisdom of restoring communal land-holding—and the land is gone.

The Nez Perces were not philosophers. They were naïve warriors, willing to fight the government of the United States for their homes just as they fought the Blackfeet or Sioux. When they were tricked and defeated they pitched their tents in alien country and lived out the rest of their lives in solitary bitterness. Yellow Wolf at eighty, a lonely and dying exile, could tell McWhorter why they fought: "It is good, dying for your rights, for your country." But the Five Civilized Tribes suffered the added corrosion of awareness. Keen and cultured political thinkers, they understood only too well the nature of the forces that were against them. The great Creek chief Pleasant Porter, explaining his people's plight to a congressional committee, rises to a height of poetic eloquence and tragic awareness reminiscent of another unlettered victim, Bartolomeo Vanzetti:

> If we had our own way we would be living with lands in common, and we would have these prairies all open, and our little bunches of cattle, and would have bands of deer that would jump up from every hollow, and flocks of turkeys running up every hillside, and every stream would be full of sun perch. These things are what we were used to in our early life. That is what we would have; and not so much corn and wheat growing, and things of that kind. But we came up against it; this civilization came up against us and we had no place to go.
>
> Q. You told us a moment ago they were dying off pretty fast.
>
> A. Yes, sir, the older people are.
>
> Q. Is there any special cause for that?
>
> A. Nothing; there is no new disease; I don't see anything other than the want of hope.

STANLEY EDGAR HYMAN

# Good Intentions

*To Sing with the Angels, by Maurice Hindus. New York: Doubleday, Doran and Company. 586 pages. $2.75.*

WHENEVER I read a novel about life in Hitler-dominated Europe I ask myself why it is not the great book someone ought to write about our time. Usually the answer is that the novelists are carried away by their good intentions; they fail to grasp their subject's implications, and their view is blurred by the three thousand miles of ocean that separate them from the background of their stories. To cover the lack of real insight a formula has been developed which makes it easy to write about this subject without knowing really what it is.

This formula is being applied to most novels and movies of anti-Nazi or, for that matter, anti-Soviet tendency. They bear a striking similarity to the anti-Communist, anti-Czech, anti-Polish, anti-democratic films and novels produced a few years ago in Nazi Germany. The subjects were reversed, but the pattern was the same; the whole thing was being stereotyped out of significance and never succeeded in turning a man into a Nazi. There it was done under dictatorial pressure and for the mere propaganda value of the idea. Here it is done with the good intention of showing people what Hitlerism "really" is. What the people see, however, with a few exceptions, turns out to be Hitlerism à la Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer, complete from the lion's roar to the happy end.

"To Sing with the Angels" does not follow the usual pattern, and the MGM touch very rarely shines through. It is the story of a village in Moravia and its struggle against Nazi domination, the story of the Czech people as a whole reflected in the men and women of this little place in the heart of Czecho-Slovakia. Particularly it is the story of a Czech girl and a young man of German descent who has been fed with Nazi ideologies and, after the German occupation, returns to his native village as a Nazi commissar. It is a tragic story, full of conflict and of hope, of human strength and weakness, as vivid as the two main characters who are the carrying power of the book.

Mr. Hindus is one who knows what he is writing about. He knows the country and the people; he lived with them during the Sudeten crisis in 1938 and has written about all this before. He loves the country and the people, and in his way he fights for them. He does it fairly, openly, and without hate. In drawing his picture he carefully avoids the extremes of black and white. In fact, there are many features in the book which could have made it a great novel. And yet, this it is not.

To begin with, Mr. Hindus is primarily a journalist, and his style is descriptive rather than dramatic. His dialogue is often dull and lengthy, and it seems to me that the book has been written much too fast and that some careful editing might have done it a great deal of good. In his love for the people he writes about and in his will to fight for them Mr. Hindus may have come to the conclusion that it is what you say that counts and not so much the way you say it. And so there are many ashes left by the burning fire of the author's good intentions. If they had been removed the fire would have been much brighter.

KLAUS LAMBRECHT

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# Under the Crooked Cross

*The Dark Gods, by Sarah Gertrude Millin. New York: Harper and Brothers. 296 pages. $2.50.*

"THE DARK GODS" is a continuation of an earlier African novel, "God's Stepchildren." The Rev. Barry Lindsell is the descendant of the Rev. Andrew Flood of the previous book. The black blood of his ancestress has been bred out of his skin, but the knowledge of its existence has not been bred out of his heart, and he is drawn back to the vomit of his forebears' miscegenation by masochism, remorse and fear. The scene is still Canaan.

The hero, John, is a native boy, mission-reared, who sees himself as a possible leader of the black race. The parson helps him, educates him, and believes in him. But to lead his people John must know them and must suffer with them; so he leaves his benefactor to travel to the Ethiopian war, paying his way by embezzling the money of his followers. He never reaches Ethiopia; his money runs out; and he returns to find his organization has fallen to pieces without his leadership. Unable to help his people he goes back to Canaan—he has failed. But has he? A German missionary says he has not, and that when the Germans come the natives must help them; that their reward will be freedom. Here is the climax. Native revolution in the name of the Christ-Hitler; in the name of the crooked cross. This is a triangle, not of two men and a woman, or two women and a man, but of two forces, those of good and evil, operating on a black man of good will.

"The Dark Gods" is a novel of infiltration that rings true. It has pace, action and color; you turn the pages fast. But in reading you find, too, that Africa is near, very near, and that we have "Africans" among us, who are also being deluded.

Maybe Africa was never the great place that Mrs. Millin's hero thought it was. Perhaps Prester John and the Queen of Sheba were not black, nor were the mines of Ophir in Rhodesia. Perhaps those were just a nigger's dreams. And we find ourselves asking what we really know of Africa and the Africans, of the hundred and fifty millions who live between Mussolini's Roman lake and the Cape of Storms, between the Indian Ocean and the oily waters that lie off Cape Verde. Perhaps they were never very great, though we do not know who built at Zimbabwe, or who made the ancient mines. But at least Mrs. Millin can tell us that the Bantus have one enviable gift—that of happiness, despite our civilized gifts to them of cast-off clothes, forced labor, taxes and syphilis. But with their happiness, they have a despondency, a hopelessness, which Mrs. Millin shows, and it is to this hopelessness that the German Führer appeals as a new deliverer, as a Christ, through his missionaries.

All this is not four or five thousand miles away. It is here in America. It is in North Carolina, for example, where so-called Baptists preach revolution to the Negroes in the name of the new Jesus-Hitler. Divide and Conquer. The dark gods are here, too. *Heil Hitler . . . Nazi . . . Nazi.* Does it come louder on the wind, or fainter?

STUART CLOETE

## Contributors

M. W. FODOR was for years the Vienna correspondent for The Manchester Guardian and The Chicago Daily News and is an outstanding authority on the Balkans.

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PEGGY BACON, one of the most distinguished of American woman artists, has also published several volumes of verse among which are "Animosities" and "Cat-Calls."

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STANLEY EDGAR HYMAN, who won The New Republic's college writing contest last year, is at present free-lancing in New York and completing a textbook on the forms of poetry.

KLAUS LAMBRECHT, writer and literary critic, has worked in France as correspondent for Swiss newspapers. He has also translated a number of American best-sellers into German for Swiss publication.

STUART CLOETE is the author of two novels about South Africa, "The Turning Wheels" and "Watch for the Dawn." His latest book is "Yesterday Is Dead," published by Smith and Durrell.

### CONTRIBUTORS TO AMERICAN WRITING: 1941

ELIZABETH BISHOP is a young poet who lives most of the time in Key West, Florida. Her poems and stories have appeared in Poetry, The New Yorker, Partisan Review and New Directions.

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PHILIP RAHV, an editor of Partisan Review since its inception, is a frequent contributor of literary criticism and reviews to The Nation, The Kenyon Review, The American Mercury and other periodicals.

VLADIMIR NABOKOV is a Russian novelist. Two of his books have been translated into English, "Laughter in the Dark" and "Despair."

BABETTE DEUTSCH, whose most recent book of verse is "One Part Love," has just completed a new biography, "Walt Whitman—Builder for America."

MORTON DAUWEN ZABEL edited the anthology: "Literary Opinion in America." He is soon to publish a critical study of nineteenth-century English poetry and a book on Yeats.

RANDALL JARRELL is an instructor in English at the University of Texas. He contributed to "Five Young American Poets," published by New Directions.

HENRY MILLER is the author of "The Tropic of Capricorn," "The Tropic of Cancer" and "The Cosmological Eye." New Directions will bring out a new selection, "The Wisdom of the Heart," next month.

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# American Writing: 1941

## Roosters

At four o'clock
in the gun-metal blue dark
we hear the first crow of the first cock

just below
the gun-metal blue window
and immediately there is an echo

off in the distance,
then one from the back-yard fence,
then one, with horrible insistence,

grates like a wet match
from the broccoli patch,
flares, and all over town begins to catch.

Cries galore
come from the water-closet door,
from the dropping-plastered hen-house floor,

where in the blue blur
their rustling wives admire,
the roosters brace their cruel feet and glare

with stupid eyes
while from their beaks there rise
the uncontrolled, traditional cries.

Deep from protruding chests
in green-gold medals dressed,
planned to command and terrorize the rest,

the many wives
who lead hens' lives
of being courted and despised;

deep from raw throats
a senseless order floats
all over town. A rooster gloats

over our beds
from rusty iron sheds
and fences made from old bedsteads,

over our churches
where the tin rooster perches,
over our little wooden northern houses,

making sallies
from all the muddy alleys,
marking out maps like Rand McNally's:

glass-headed pins,
oil-golds and copper-greens,
anthracite blues, alizarins,

each one an active
displacement in perspective;
each screaming, "This is where I live!"

Each screaming
"Get up! Stop dreaming!"
Roosters, what are you projecting?

You, whom the Greeks elected
to shoot at on a post, who struggled
when sacrificed, you whom they labeled

"Very combative . . ."
what right have you to give
commands, and tell us how to live,

cry "Here!" and "Here!"
and wake us here where are
unwanted love, conceit and war?

The crown of red
set on your little head
is charged with all your fighting-blood.

Yes, that excrescence
makes a most virile presence,
plus all that vulgar beauty of iridescence.

Now in mid-air
by twos they fight each other.
Down comes a first flame-feather,

and one is flying,
with raging heroism defying
even the sensation of dying.

And one has fallen,
but still above the town
his torn-out, bloodied feathers drift down;

and what he sung
no matter. He is flung
on the gray ash-heap, lies in dung

with his dead wives
with open, bloody eyes,
while those metallic feathers oxidize.

. . .

St. Peter's sin
was worse than that of Magdalen
whose sin was of the flesh alone;

of spirit, Peter's,
falling, beneath the flares,
among the "servants and officers."

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Old holy scripture
could set it all together
in one small scene, past and future:

Christ stands amazed,
Peter, two fingers raised
to surprised lips, both as if dazed.

But in between
a little cock is seen
carved on a dim column in the travertine,

explained by *Gallus Canit;*
*Flet Petrus* underneath it.
There is inescapable hope, the pivot;

yes, and there Peter's tears
run down our chanticleer's
sides and gem his spurs.

Tear-encrusted thick
as a medieval relic
he waits. Poor Peter, heart-sick,

still cannot guess
those cock-a-doodles yet might bless,
his dreadful rooster come to mean forgiveness,

a new weathervane
on basilica and barn,
and that outside the Lateran

there would always be
a bronze cock on a porphyry
pillar so the people and the Pope might see

that even the Prince
of the Apostles long since
had been forgiven, and to convince

all the assembly
that "Deny deny deny,"
is not all the roosters cry.

. . .

In the morning
a low light is floating
in the backyard, and gilding

from underneath
the broccoli, leaf by leaf;
how could the night have come to grief?

gilding the tiny
floating swallow's belly
and lines of pink cloud in the sky,

the day's preamble
like wandering lines in marble.
The cocks are now almost inaudible.

The sun climbs in,
following "to see the end,"
faithful as enemy, or friend.

ELIZABETH BISHOP

# The Wound and the Bow

THE "PHILOCTETES" of Sophocles is far from being his most popular play. The myth itself has not been one of those which have excited the modern imagination. The idea of Philoctetes' long illness and his banishment to the bleak island is dreary or distasteful to the young, who like to identify themselves with men of action—with Heracles or Perseus or Achilles; and for adults the story told by Sophocles fails to set off such emotional charges as are liberated by the crimes of the Atreidai and the tragedies of the siege of Troy. Whatever may have been dashing in the legend has been lost with the other plays and poems that dealt with it. Philoctetes is hardly mentioned in Homer; and we have only an incomplete account of the plays by Aeschylus and Euripides, which hinged on a critical moment of the campaign of the Greeks at Troy and which seem to have exploited the emotions of Greek patriotism. We have only a few scattered lines and phrases from that other play by Sophocles on the subject, the "Philoctetes at Troy," in which the humiliated hero was presumably to be cured of his ulcer and to proceed to his victory over Paris.

There survives only this one curious drama which presents Philoctetes in exile—a drama which does not supply us at all with what we ordinarily expect of Greek tragedy, since it culminates in no catastrophe, and which indeed resembles rather our modern idea of a comedy (though the record of the lost plays of Sophocles show that there must have been others like it). Its interest depends almost as much on the latent interplay of character, on a gradual psychological conflict, as that of "Le Misanthrope." And it assigns itself, also, to a category even more special and less generally appealing through the fact (though this, again, was a feature not uncommon with Sophocles) that the conflict is not even allowed to take place between a man and a woman. Nor does it even put before us the spectacle—which may be made exceedingly thrilling—of the individual in conflict with his social group, which we get in such plays devoid of feminine interest as "Coriolanus" and "An Enemy of the People." Nor is the conflict even a dual one, as most dramatic conflicts are—so that our emotions seesaw up and down between two opposed persons or groups: though Philoctetes and Odysseus struggle for the loyalty of Neoptolemus, he himself emerges more and more distinctly as representing an independent point of view, so that the contrast becomes a triple affair which makes more complicated demands on our sympathies.

A French dramatist of the seventeenth century, Chateaubrun, found the subject so inconceivable that, in trying to concoct an adaptation which would be acceptable to the taste of his time, he provided Philoctetes with a daughter named Sophie with whom Neoptolemus was to fall in love and thus bring the drama back

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to the reliable and eternal formula of Romeo and Juliet and the organizer who loves the factory owner's daughter. And if we look for the imprint of the play on literature since the Renaissance, we shall find a very meager record: a chapter of Fénelon's "Télémache," a discussion in Lessing's "Laocoön," a sonnet of Wordsworth's, a little play by André Gide, an adaptation by John Jay Chapman—this is all, so far as I know, that has any claim to interest.

And yet the play itself *is* most interesting, as some of these writers have felt; and it is certainly one of Sophocles' masterpieces. If we come upon it in the course of reading him, without having heard it praised, we are surprised to be so charmed, so moved—to find ourselves in the presence of something that is so much less crude in its subtlety than either a three-cornered modern comedy like "Candida" or "La Parisienne" or an underplayed affair of male honor in a story by Ernest Hemingway, to both of which it has some similarity. It is as if having the three men on the lonely island has enabled the highly sophisticated Sophocles to get further away from the framework of the old myths on which he has to depend and whose barbarities, anomalies and absurdities, tactfully and realistically though he handles them, seem sometimes almost as much out of place as they would in a dialogue by Plato. The people of the "Philoctetes" seem to us more familiar than the characters usually do in Greek tragedies[1]; and they take on for us a more intimate meaning. Philoctetes remains in our mind, and his incurable wound and his invincible bow recur to us with a special insistence. But what is it they mean? How is it possible for Sophocles to make us accept them so naturally? Why do we enter with scarcely a stumble into the situation of people who are preoccupied with a snake-bite that lasts forever and a weapon that cannot fail?

Let us first take account of the peculiar twist which Sophocles seems to have given the legend, as it had reached him from the old epics and the dramatists who had used it before him.

The main outline of the story ran as follows: The demigod Heracles had been given by Apollo a bow that never missed its mark. When, poisoned by Deianeira's robe, he had had himself burned on Mount Oeta, he had persuaded Philoctetes to light the pyre and had rewarded him by bequeathing to him this weapon. Philoctetes had thus been formidably equipped when he had later set forth against Troy with Agamemnon and Menelaus. But on the way they had to stop off at the tiny island of Chrysè to sacrifice to the local deity. Philoctetes approached the shrine first, and he was bitten in the foot by a snake. The infection became peculiarly virulent; and the groans of Philoctetes made it impossible to perform the sacrifice, which would be spoiled by ill omened sounds; the bite began to suppurate with so horrible a smell that his companions could not bear to have him near them. They removed him to Lemnos, a neighboring island which was much larger than Chrysè and inhabited, and sailed away to Troy without him.

Philoctetes remained there ten years. The mysterious wound never healed. In the meantime, the Greeks, hard put to it at Troy after the deaths of Achilles and Ajax and baffled by the confession of their soothsayer that he was unable to advise them further, had kidnaped the soothsayer of the Trojans and had forced him to reveal to them that they could never win till they had sent for Neoptolemus, the son of Achilles, and given him his father's armor, and till they had brought Philoctetes and his bow.

Both these things were done. Philoctetes was healed at Troy by the son of the physician Asclepius; and he fought Paris in single combat and killed him. Philoctetes and Neoptolemus became the heroes of the victory.

Both Aeschylus and Euripides wrote plays on this subject long before Sophocles did; and we know something about them from a comparison of the treatments by the three different dramatists which was written by Dion Chrysostom, a rhetorician of the first century A.D. Both these versions would seem to have been mainly concerned with the relation of Philoctetes to the success of the Greek campaign. All three of the plays dealt with the same episode: the visit of Odysseus to Lemnos for the purpose of getting the bow; and all represented Odysseus as particularly hateful to Philoctetes (because he had been one of those responsible for abandoning him on the island); and obliged to resort to cunning. But the emphasis of Sophocles' treatment appears fundamentally to have differed from that of the other two. In the drama of Aeschylus, we are told, Odysseus was not recognized by Philoctetes, and he seems simply to have stolen the bow. In Euripides, he was disguised by Athena in the likeness of another person, and he pretended that he had been wronged by the Greeks as Philoctetes had been. He had to compete with a delegation of Trojans, who had been sent to get the bow for their side and who arrived at the same time as he; and we do not know precisely what happened. But Dion Chrysostom regarded the play as "a masterpiece of declamation" and "a model of ingenious debate," and Jebb thinks it probable that Odysseus won the contest by an appeal to Philoctetes' patriotism. Since Odysseus was pretending to have been wronged by the Greeks, he could point to his own behavior in suppressing his personal resentments in the interest of saving Greek honor. The moral theme thus established by Aeschylus and Euripides both would have been simply, like the theme of the wrath of Achilles, the conflict

[1] "Apropos of the rare occasions when the ancients seem just like us it always has seemed to me that a wonderful example was the repentance of the lad in the ('Philoctetes'?) play of Sophocles over his deceit and the restoration of the bow."—Mr. Justice Holmes to Sir Frederick Pollock, October 2, 1921.

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between the passions of an individual—in this case, an individual suffering from a genuine wrong—and the demands of duty to a common cause.

This conflict appears also in Sophocles; but it takes on a peculiar aspect. Sophocles, in the plays of his we have, shows himself particularly successful with people whose natures have been poisoned by narrow fanatical hatreds. Even allowing for the tendency of Greek heroes, in legend and history both, to fly into rather childish rages, we still feel on Sophocles' part some sort of special point of view, some sort of special sympathy for these cases. Such people—Electra and the embittered old Oedipus—suffer as much as they hate: it is because they suffer they hate. They horrify, but they waken pity. Philoctetes is such another: a man obsessed by a grievance, which in his case he is to be kept from forgetting by an agonizing physical ailment; and for Sophocles his pain and hatred have a dignity and an interest. Just as it is by no means plain to Sophocles that in the affair of Antigone *versus* Cleon it is the official point of view of Cleon, representing the interests of his victorious faction, which should have the last word against Antigone, infuriated by a personal wrong; so it is by no means plain to him that the morality of Odysseus, who is lying and stealing for the fatherland, necessarily deserves to prevail over the animus of the stricken Philoctetes.

The contribution of Sophocles to the story is a third person who will sympathize with Philoctetes. This new character is Neoptolemus, the young son of Achilles, who, along with Philoctetes, is indispensable to the victory of the Greeks and who has just been summoned to Troy. Odysseus is made to bring him to Lemnos for the purpose of deceiving Philoctetes and shanghaiing him aboard the ship.

The play opens with a scene between Odysseus and the boy, in which the former explains the purpose of their trip. Odysseus will remain in hiding in order not to be recognized by Philoctetes, and Neoptolemus will go up to the cave in which Philoctetes lives and win his confidence by pretending that the Greeks have robbed him of his father's armor, so that he, too, has a grievance against them. The youth in his innocence and candor objects when he is told what his role is to be, but Odysseus persuades him by reminding him that they can only take Troy through his obedience and that once they have taken Troy, he will be glorified for his bravery and wisdom. "As soon as we have won," Odysseus assures him, "we shall conduct ourselves with perfect honesty. But for one short day of dishonesty, allow me to direct you what to do—and then forever after you will be known as the most righteous of men." The line of argument adopted by Odysseus is one with which the politics of our time have made us very familiar. "Isn't it base, then, to tell falsehoods?" Neoptolemus asks. "Not," Odysseus replies, "when a falsehood will bring our salvation."

Neoptolemus goes to talk to Philoctetes. He finds him in his wretched cave—described by Sophocles with characteristic realism: the bed of leaves, the crude wooden bowl, the filthy bandages drying in the sun—where he has been living in rags for ten years, limping out from time to time to shoot wild birds or to get himself wood and water. The boy hears the harrowing story of Philoctetes' desertion by the Greeks and listens to his indignation. The ruined captain begs Neoptolemus to take him back to his native land, and the young man pretends to consent. (Here and elsewhere I am telescoping the scenes and simplifying a more complex development.) But just as they are leaving for the ship, the ulcer on Philoctetes' foot sets up an ominous throbbing in preparation for one of its periodical burstings: "She returns from time to time," says the invalid, "as if she were sated with her wanderings." In a moment he is stretched on the ground, writhing in abject anguish and begging the young man to cut off his foot. He gives Neoptolemus the bow, telling him to take care of it till his seizure is over. A second spasm, worse than the first, reduces him to imploring the boy to throw him into the crater of the Lemnian volcano: so he himself, he says, had lit the fire which consumed the tormented Heracles and had got in return these arms which he is now handing on to Neoptolemus. The pain abates a little; "It comes and goes," says Philoctetes; and he entreats the young man not to leave him. "Don't worry about that. We'll stay." "I shan't even make you swear it, my son." "It would not be right to leave you" (it would not be right, of course, even from the Greeks' point of view). They shake hands on it. A third paroxysm twists the cripple; now he asks Neoptolemus to carry him to the cave, but shrinks from his touch and struggles. At last the abcess bursts, the dark blood begins to flow. Philoctetes, faint and sweating, falls asleep.

The sailors who have come with Neoptolemus urge him to make off with the bow. "No," the young man replies. "He cannot hear us; but I am sure that it will not be enough for us to recapture the bow without him. It is he who is to have the glory—it was he the god told us to bring."

While they are arguing, Philoctetes awakes and thanks the young man with emotion: "Agamemnon and Menelaus were not so patient and loyal." But now they must get him to the ship, and the boy will have to see him undeceived and endure his bitter reproaches. "The men will carry you down," says Neoptolemus. "Don't trouble them: just help me up," Philoctetes replies. "It would be too disagreeable for them to take me all the way to the ship." The smell of the suppuration has been horrible. The young man begins to hesitate. The other sees that he is in doubt about something: "You're not so overcome with disgust at my malady that you don't think you can have me on the ship with you?"—

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οὐ δή σε δυσχέρεια τοῦ νοσήματος
ἔπεισεν ὥστε μή μ' ἄγειν ναύτην ἔτι;

The answer is one of the most effective of those swift and brief speeches of Sophocles which for the first time make a situation explicit (my attempts to render this dialogue colloquially do no justice to the feeling and point of the verse):

ἅπαντα δυσχέρεια, τὴν αὑτοῦ φύσιν
ὅταν λιπών τις δρᾷ τὰ μὴ προσεικότα.

"Everything becomes disgusting when you are false to your own nature and do things that go against the grain."

He confesses his real intentions; and a painful scene occurs. Philoctetes denounces the boy in terms that would be appropriate for Odysseus; he sees himself robbed of his bow and left to starve on the island. The young man is deeply worried: "Why did I ever leave Scyros?" he asks himself. "Comrades, what shall I do?"

At this moment, Odysseus, who has been listening, pops out from his hiding place. With a lash of abuse at Neoptolemus, he orders him to hand over the arms. The young man's spirit flares up: when Odysseus invokes the will of Zeus, he tells him that he is degrading the gods by lending them his own lies. Philoctetes turns on Odysseus with an invective which cannot fail to impress the generous Neoptolemus: Why have they come for him now? he demands. Is he not still just as ill omened and loathsome as he had been when they made him an outcast? They have only come back to get him because the gods have told them they must.

The young man now defies his mentor and takes his stand with Philoctetes. Odysseus threatens him: if he persists, he will have the whole Greek army against him, and they will see to it that he is punished for his treason. Neoptolemus declares his intention of taking Philoctetes home; he gives him back his bow. Odysseus tries to intervene; but Philoctetes has got the bow and aims an arrow at him. Neoptolemus seizes his hand and restrains him. Odysseus, always prudent, beats a quiet retreat.

Now the boy tries to persuade the angry man that he should, nevertheless, rescue the Greeks. "I have proved my good faith," says Neoptolemus; "You know that I am not going to coerce you. Why be so wrong-headed? When the gods afflict us, we are obliged to bear our misfortunes; but must people pity a man who suffers through his own choice? The snake that bit you was an agent of the gods, it was the guardian of the goddess's shrine, and I swear to you by Zeus that the sons of Asclepius will cure you if you let us take you to Troy." Philoctetes is incredulous, refuses; "Since you gave me your word," he says, "take me home again." "The Greeks will attack me and ruin me." "I'll defend you." "How can you?" "With my bow." Neoptolemus is forced to consent.

But now Heracles suddenly appears from the skies and declares to Philoctetes that what the young man says is true, and that it is right for him to go to Troy. He and the son of Achilles shall stand together like lions and shall gloriously carry the day.—The *deus ex machina* here may of course figure a change of heart which has taken place in Philoctetes as the result of his having found a man who recognizes the wrong that has been done him and who is willing to champion his cause in defiance of all the Greeks. His patron, the chivalrous Heracles, who had himself performed so many generous exploits, asserts his influence over his heir. The long hatred is finally exorcised.

In a fine lyric utterance which ends the play, Philoctetes says farewell to the cavern, where he has lain through so many nights listening to the deep-voiced waves as they crashed against the headland, and wetted by the rain and the spray blown in by the winter gales. A favorable wind has sprung up; and he sails away to Troy.

It is possible to guess at several motivations behind the writing of the "Philoctetes." The play was produced in 409, when—if the tradition of his longevity be true—Sophocles would have been eighty-seven; and it is supposed to have been followed by the "Oedipus Coloneus," which is assigned to 405 or 406. The latter deals directly with old age; but it would appear that the "Philoctetes" anticipates this theme in another form. Philoctetes, like the outlawed Oedipus, is impoverished, humbled, abandoned by his people, exacerbated by hardship and chagrin. He is accursed: Philoctetes' ulcer is an equivalent for the abhorrent sins of Oedipus, parricide and incest together, which have made of the ruler a pariah. And yet somehow both are sacred persons who have acquired superhuman powers, and who are destined to be purged of their guilt. One passage from the earlier play is even strikingly repeated in the later. The conception of the wave-beaten promontory and the sick man lying in his cave assailed by the wind and rain turns up in the "Oedipus Coloneus" (Colonus was Sophocles' native deme) with a figurative moral value: so the afflictions of age are described as assailing Oedipus. But Oedipus has endured as Philoctetes has endured in the teeth of all the cold and the darkness, the screaming winds and the bellowing breakers: the blind old man is here in his own person the headland that stands against the storm.

We may remember a widely current story about the creator of these two figures. It is said that one of Sophocles' sons brought him into court in his advanced old age on the complaint that he was no longer competent to manage his property. The old poet is supposed to have recited a passage from the play which he had been writing: the chorus in praise of Colonus, with its clear song of nightingales, its wine-dark ivy, its crocus glowing golden and its narcissus moist with dew, where the stainless stream of the Cephisus wanders through

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the broad-swelling plain and where the gray-leaved olive grows of itself beneath the gaze of the gray-eyed Athena—shining Colonus, breeder of horses and of oarsmen whom the Nereids lead. The scene had been represented on the stage and Sophocles had been made to declare: "If I am Sophocles, I am not mentally incapable; if I am mentally incapable, I am not Sophocles." In any case, the story was that the tribunal, composed of his fellow clansmen, applauded and acquitted the poet and censored the litigating son. The ruined and humiliated heroes of Sophocles' later plays are still persons of mysterious virtue, whom their fellows are forced to respect.

There is also a possibility, even a strong probability, that Sophocles intended Philoctetes to be identified with Alcibiades. This brilliant and unique individual, one of the great military leaders of the Athenians, had been accused by political opponents of damaging the sacred statues of Hermes and burlesquing the Eleusinian mysteries, and had been summoned to stand trial at Athens while he was away on his campaign against Sicily. He had at once gone over to the Spartans, commencing that strange career of shifting allegiances which ended with his returning to the Athenian side. At a moment of extreme danger, he had taken over a part of the Athenian fleet and had defeated the Spartans in two sensational battles in 411 and 410, thus sweeping them out of the Eastern Aegean and enabling the Athenians to dominate the Hellespont. The "Philoctetes" was produced in 409, when the Athenians already wanted him back and were ready to cancel the charges against him and to restore him to citizenship. Alcibiades was a startling example of a bad character who was indispensable. Plutarch says that Aristophanes well describes the Athenian feeling about Alcibiades when he writes: "They miss him and hate him and long to have him back." And the malady of Philoctetes may have figured his moral defects: the unruly and unscrupulous nature which, even though he seems to have been innocent of the charges brought against him, had given them a certain plausibility. It must have looked to the Athenians, too, after the victories of Abydos and Cyzicus, as if he possessed an invincible bow. Plutarch says that the men who had served under him at the taking of Cyzicus did actually come to regard themselves as undefeatable and refused to share quarters with other soldiers who had fought in less successful engagements.

Yet behind both the picture of old age and the line in regard to Alcibiades, one feels in the "Philoctetes" a more general and fundamental idea: the conception of superior strength as inseparable from disability.

For the superiority of Philoctetes does not reside merely in the enchanted bow. When Lessing replied to Winckelmann, who had referred to Sophocles' cripple as if he were an example of the conventional idea of impassive classical fortitude, he pointed out that, far from exemplifying impassivity, Philoctetes becomes completely demoralized every time he has one of his seizures, and yet that this only heightens our admiration for the pride which prevents him from escaping at the expense of helping those who have deserted him.

For André Gide, in his "Philoctète," the obstinacy of the invalid hermit takes on a character almost mystical. By persisting in his bleak and lonely life, the Philoctetes of Gide wins the love of a more childlike Neoptolemus and even compels the respect of a less hard-boiled Odysseus. He is practising a kind of virtue superior not only to the virtue of the latter, with his code of obedience to the demands of the group, but also to that of the former, who forgets his patriotic obligations for those of a personal attachment. There is something above the gods, says the Philoctetes of Gide; and it is virtue to devote oneself to this. But what is it? asks Neoptolemus. I do not know, he answers; oneself! The misfortune of his exile on the island has enabled him to perfect himself: "I have learned to express myself better," he tells them, "now that I am no longer with men. Between hunting and sleeping, I occupy myself with thinking."

The Philoctetes of Gide is, in fact, a literary man: at once a moralist and an artist, whose genius becomes purer and deeper in ratio to his isolation and outlawry. In the end, he lets the intruders steal the bow after satisfying himself that Neoptolemus can handle it, and subsides into a blissful tranquility, much relieved that there is no longer any reason for people to seek him out.

With Gide we come close to a further implication, which even Gide does not fully develop but which must occur to the modern reader: the idea that genius and disease, like strength and mutilation, may be inextricably bound up together. It is significant that the only two writers of our time who have especially interested themselves in Philoctetes: André Gide and John Jay Chapman—should both be persons who have not only, like the hero of the play, stood at an angle to the morality of society and defended their position with stubbornness, but who have suffered from psychological disorders which have made them, in Gide's case, ill regarded by his fellows; in Chapman's case, excessively difficult. Nor is it perhaps accidental that Charles Lamb, with his experience of his sister's insanity, should in his essay on "The Convalescent" choose the figure of Philoctetes as a symbol for his own "nervous fever."

And we must even, I believe, grant Sophocles some special insight into morbid psychology. The tragic themes of all three of the great dramatists—the madnesses, the murders and the incests—may seem to us sufficiently morbid. The hero with an incurable wound was even a stock subject of myth not confined to the Philoctetes legend: there was also the story of Telephus, also wounded and also indispensable, about which both Sophocles and Euripides wrote plays. But there is

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a difference between the treatment that Sophocles gives to these conventional epic subjects and the treatments of the other writers: Aeschylus is more religious and philosophical; Euripides more romantic and sentimental. Sophocles by comparison is clinical. Arthur Platt, who had a special interest in the scientific aspect of the classics, says that Sophocles was scrupulously up to date in the physical science of his time. He was himself closely associated by tradition with the cult of the healer Asclepius, whose son is to cure Philoctetes: Lucian had read a poem which he had dedicated to the doctor-god; and Plutarch reports that Asclepius was supposed to have visited his hearth; he is said also to have been actually a priest of another of the medical cults. Platt speaks particularly of his medical knowledge—which is illustrated by the naturalism and precision of his description in "Philoctetes" of the behavior of the infected bite.

But there is also in Sophocles a cool observation of the behavior of psychological derangements. The madness of Ajax is a genuine madness, from which he recovers to be horrified at the realization of what he has done. And it was not without good reason that Freud laid Sophocles under contribution for the naming of the Oedipus complex—since Sophocles had not only dramatized the myth that dwelt with the violation of the incest taboo, but had exhibited the suppressed impulse behind it in the speech in which he makes Jocasta attempt to reassure Oedipus by reminding him that it was not uncommon for men to dream about sleeping with their mothers—"and he who thinks nothing of this gets through his life most easily." Those who do not get through life so easily are presented by Sophocles with a very firm grasp on the springs of their abnormal conduct. Electra is what we should call nowadays schizophrenic: the woman who weeps over the urn which is supposed to contain her brother's ashes is not "integrated," as we say, with the fury who prepares her mother's murder. And certainly the fanaticism of Antigone—"fixated," like Electra, on her brother—is intended to be abnormal, too.

It has been the misfortune of Sophocles to figure in academic tradition as the model of those qualities of coolness and restraint which that tradition regards as classical. Those who have never read him —remembering the familiar statue—imagine something hollow and marmoreal. Actually, as C. M. Bowra says, Sophocles is "passionate and profound." Almost everything that we are told about him by the tradition of the ancient world suggests equanimity and amiability and the enjoyment of unusual good fortune. But there is one important exception: the anecdote in Plato's "Republic" in which Sophocles is reported to have said that the release from amorous desire which had come to him in his old age had been to him like liberation from an insane and cruel master. He has balance and logic, of course—those qualities that the classicists admire; but these qualities only count because they master so much savagery and madness. Somewhere even in the fortunate Sophocles there must have been a sick Philoctetes.

And now let us go back to the "Philoctetes" as a parable of human character. I should interpret the fable as follows. The victim of a malodorous disease which renders him abhorrent to society and periodically degrades him and makes him helpless, is also the master of a superhuman art which everybody has to respect and which the normal man finds he needs. A practical man like Odysseus, at the same time coarse-grained and clever, imagines that he can somehow get the bow without having Philoctetes on his hands or that he can kidnap Philoctetes the bowman without regard for Philoctetes the invalid. But the young son of Achilles knows better. It is at the moment when his sympathy for Philoctetes would naturally inhibit his cheating him—so the supernatural influences in Sophocles are often made with infinite delicacy to shade into subjective motivations—it is at this moment of his natural shrinking that it becomes clear to him that the words of the seer had meant that the bow would be useless without Philoctetes himself. It is in the nature of things—of this world where the divine and the human fuse—that they cannot have the irresistible weapon without its loathsome owner, who upsets the processes of normal life by his curses and his cries, and who in any case refuses to work for men who have exiled him from their fellowship.

It is quite right that Philoctetes should refuse to come to Troy. Yet it is also decreed that he shall be cured when he shall have been able to forget his grievance and to devote his divine gifts to the service of his own people. It is right that he should refuse to submit to the purposes of Odysseus, whose only idea is to exploit him. How then is the gulf to be got over between the ineffective plight of the bowman and his proper use of his bow, between his ignominy and his destined glory? Only by the intervention of one who is guileless enough and human enough to treat him, not as a monster, nor yet as a mere magical property which is wanted for accomplishing some end, but simply as another man, whose sufferings elicit his sympathy and whose courage and pride he admires. When this human relation has been realized, it seems at first that it is to have the consequence of frustrating the purpose of the expedition and ruining the Greek campaign. Instead of winning over the outlaw, Neoptolemus has outlawed himself as well, at a time when both the boy and the cripple are desperately needed by the Greeks. Yet in taking the risk to his cause which is involved in the recognition of his common humanity with the sick man, in refusing to break his word, he dispels Philoctetes' stubbornness, and thus cures him and sets him free, and saves the campaign as well.

EDMUND WILSON

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## Epilogue

*To a strange, hollow and confusèd noise*
*Heavily vanish*—all those presences
That comforted the scene. He stands alone.
The stage is a barn. The stage is like his heart,
Surrendered, deserted, unutterably his own.
There are cries from the wings, and prompting. But he stands
Uncomprehending, shouted-at, and mute;
Enduring, not performing. Dumb. The hall
Is also emptied out. People are going.
He knows there should be a soliloquy, and music,
But no sounds come. And no applause at all.

## The Man with a Double Fracture

Better be grieving over loss and lack
Than grow, from too close presence, mad or mean;
The injured summer soldier struggles back
To face the winter scene
In no less misery for being found
With self-inflicted wound.

Yet to what neighborhood return? The pits
And craters of remorse
Show the familiar quarters blown to bits
And wreck, with downright force,
Forever keeps the line from being true
*Tomorrow to fresh woods and pastures new.*

## The War in the Dark

(Sestina)

*—Sir, in my heart there was a kind of fighting*
*That would not let me sleep.*

This fighting grows more hideous hour by hour:
Who can be brave against the war in the dark?
Whose wisdom taut enough to generate light?
Harsh conscience, stifled heart, no help at all;
Night without comfort, winter without sleep,
Nervousness rife, love perishing in cold.

Hell is an agony of bitter cold
Whose fang corrodes, whose talons fix the hour
On frozen rigid points, impaling sleep
Forever out of reach, and turning darkness
From time to permanence, infecting all
With chill and idiot doting, void of light.

Illumination or illusion, light
Fails, and is gone, and, residents of cold,
All we can do is hurt each other always
Improving on our methods every hour,
Struggle, embracing, locked and tight, in dark
Never succeeded, as it was, by sleep.

There used to be a certitude, that sleep
Would be a preparation for the light
Of morning, and the day, however dark
The weather, and the year, however cold,
Would yield their season of armistice, their hour
Of decent mercy, compassionate for all.

But now the singers and the dancers all
Are still as stone, and neither wake nor sleep,
Like warriors roused before the zero hour
And shot, and frozen, standing in the light
Reflected from the snow, colder and colder,
Erect in horrible torpor, facing dark.

Love is a witless exile in the dark,
Delirious exile, wretchedest of all,
Like a gaunt dog in a hallway, out of the cold,
Starving to death through numb and slower sleep,
Hurt only by experience of light,
Foolishly fed in dissolution's hour.

O in this hour, this agony, this dark,
Who knows what light or music, clear to all
Waits beyond sleep, the other side of cold?

## The Intellectuals

*Aeternum, stagno, dixit, vivatis in isto.*

There was Cassandra, whom Apollo loved,
To whom, for promised love, he made a gift,
*Always to prophesy truly;*
And, for the promise broken, another token,
*Never to be believed:*

And there are also men
Who never loved Apollo, nor he them,
Descended from those Lycian ancestors
Who made the water muddy for Latona,
And for their churlishness were turned to frogs
Forever in that marsh.
*Brek-ek-ek-ex,*
*Co-ax, co-ax!* Oho, Batrachians,
Isn't it fun to bubble in the puddles?

*Always to prophesy falsely;*
*Always to seem, at least, to be believed.*

## No Enemy

Praise to this winter, for its prison-hold
On summer's hostage sun, and captive light!
When branches crack like cannon in the cold,
Hear the austere artillery of night:
Better be met with bitterness, and brave
In charity and chill, than ever go
Where a green season fattens for the grave
Skulkers from ice, and fugitives of snow.

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Cherish the blizzard, then, and love the storm
Whose rage is peace, whose fierce white fume is fire;
Take to the heart this cold that keeps men warm,
Harbor this bitter uncorrupted host,
And let the sight, patrolling far, admire
Surf in dark woods, great mountains off the coast.

### Apostrophe, for the Seven Strings

*"Te veniente die—"*

O Thou my morning song, Thee still at evening
I also praise. O gravest loveliness
In the sad hour; O wit and hardihood
Through landscape's green composure; sweet response
To ghost and substance; richness in the rock,
Peace under the cloud, light on the lonely shore,
O morning song, Thee, in the dark, I praise.

ROLFE HUMPHRIES

# The Artist as Desperado

HENRY MILLER, the last of the expatriates to exhibit original gifts before the Nazis pulled the shades down on Paris, is the one genuine desperado among the American writers whose careers opened during the past decade. And it is exactly this quality in him—the quality of the desperado—which makes people wonder whether or not to take him seriously. There is only one way, of course, of making up one's mind in this matter, and that is actually to read Miller's three novels—"Tropic of Cancer," "Black Spring" and "Tropic of Capricorn"—and not merely the expurgated sections and the literary essays that New Directions has brought out in this country. To judge him by "The Cosmological Eye" and "Hamlet" alone is to do him an injustice, for in these volumes he gives free rein to his worst tendency, the tendency to play the philosopher on a binge and the gadabout of the avant-garde. Unfortunately, except for bootlegged copies, his novels are as yet unavailable here. But perhaps this report will help to clarify the Henry Miller situation.

Miller's novels are autobiographical, and he appears in them in the familiar role of the artist-hero who dominates modern fiction. But where he differs from this ubiquitous type is in the extremity of his destitution and estrangement from society. Reduced to the status of a lumpen-proletarian whom the desolation of the big city has finally drained of all illusions and ideals, he is now an utterly declassed and alienated man who lives his life in the open streets of Paris and New York. Every contact with cultural objects serves merely to exacerbate his anarchic impulses. There no longer exists for him any shelter from the external world. Even the idea of home—a place that the individual can truly call his own because it is furnished not only with his belongings but with his very humanity—has been obliterated. What remains is the fantasy of returning to the womb, a fantasy so obsessive as to give rise to an elaborate intra-uterine imagery as well as to any number of puns, jokes, imprecations and appeals.

It is precisely in his descriptions of his lumpen-proletarian life in the streets that Miller is at his best, that his prose is most resonant and alive—the streets in which a never ending array of decomposed and erratic phenomena gives his wanderings in search of a woman or a meal the metaphysical sheen of dream and legend. In every shop-window he sees the "sea-nymph squirming in the maniac's arms," and everywhere he smells the odor of love "gushing like sewer gas" out of the leading mains: "Love without gender and without lysol, incubational love, such as the wolverines practise above the tree-line." In these novels food and sex are thematically treated with such matter-of-fact exactitude, with such a forceful and vindictive awareness of rock-bottom needs, that they cease to mean what they mean to most of us. Miller invokes food and sex as heroic sentiments and even generalizes them into principles. For the man who is down and out has eyes only for that which he misses most frequently; his condition makes of him a natural anarchist, rendering irrelevant all conventions, moral codes, or any attempt to order the process of experience according to some value-pattern. The problem is simply to keep alive, and to that end all means are permissible. One turns into a desperado, lurking in ambush in hallways, bars and hotel-rooms in the hope that some stroke of luck will enable one "to make a woman or make a touch." He literally takes candy from babies and steals money from prostitutes. As for obtaining regular work, he was always able "to amuse, to nourish, to instruct, but never to be accepted in a genuine way . . . everything conspired to set me off as an *outlaw*."

The fact that the world is in a state of collapse fills him with deep gratification ("I am dazzled by the glorious collapse of the world") because the all-around ruin seems to justify and validate what has happened to him personally. His particular adjustment he accomplishes by accepting the collapse as a kind of apocalyptic show from which the artist who has been rejected by society, and whose role is to revive the primeval, chaotic instincts, might even expect to gain the resurgence of those dreams and myths that the Philistines have done their utmost to suppress. It is senseless to interfere, to try to avert the catastrophe; all one can do is to recoil into one's private fate. "The world is what it is and I am what I am," he declares. "I expose myself to the destructive elements that surround me. I let everything wreak its own havoc with me. I bend over to spy on the secret processes, to *obey* rather than to command." And again: "I'm neither for nor against, I'm neutral. . . . If to live is the paramount thing, then I will live even if I become a cannibal." And even in his own proper sphere the artist is no longer free to construct objective forms. He must

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abandon the "literary gold standard" and devote himself to creating biographical works—human documents rather than "literature"—depicting "man in the grip of delirium."

And Miller's practice fits his theory. His novels do in fact dissolve the forms and genres of writing in a stream of exhortation, narrative, world-historical criticism, prose poetry and spontaneous philosophy, all equally subjected to the strain and grind of self-expression at all costs. So riled is his ego by external reality, so confused and helpless, that he can no longer afford the continual sacrifice of personality that the act of creation requires, he can no longer bear to express himself implicitly by means of the work of art as a whole but must simultaneously permeate and absorb each of its separate parts and details. If everything else has failed me, this author seems to say, at least this book is mine, here everything is fashioned in my own image, here I am God.

This is the meaning, I think, of the "biographical" esthetic that Miller at once practises and preaches and which an increasing number of writers, though not cognizant of it as a program, nevertheless practise in the same compulsive manner, not necessarily for reasons as personal as Miller's or with the same results, but because the growing "alienation" of man in modern society throws them back into narcissistic attitudes, forces them to undertake the shattering task of possessing the world that is now full of abstractions and mystifications through the instrumentality of the self and the self alone. Not "Know Thyself!" but "Be Yourself!" is their motto. Thomas Wolfe was such a writer, and his career was frustrated by the fact that he lacked sufficient consciousness to understand his dilemma. Miller, on the other hand, is well aware of his position. Instead of attempting to recover the lost relation to the world, he accepts his "alienated" status as his inexorable fate, and by doing so he is able to come to some kind of terms with it.

Freedom is the recognition of necessity—and what Miller gains is the freedom to go the whole length in the subversion of values, to expose more fully perhaps than any other novelist in English the nihilism of the self which has been cut off from all social ties and released not only from any allegiance to the past but also from all commitments to the future. The peculiarly American affirmation voiced by Whitman is completely negated in him. Total negation instead of total affirmation! No wonder that like Wolfe and Hart Crane and other lost souls he is continually haunted by Whitman as by an apparition. In "Tropic of Cancer" he speaks of him as "the one lone figure which America has produced in the course of her brief life . . . the first and last poet . . . who is almost undecipherable today, a monument covered with rude hieroglyphs for which there is no key." And it is precisely because he has had the temerity to go the whole length that Miller is important as a literary character, though his importance, as the English critic George Orwell observes, may be more symptomatic than substantial, in the sense that the extreme of passivity, amoralism and acceptance of evil that his work represents tends to demonstrate "the *impossibility* of any major literature until the world has shaken itself into a new shape."

In all his books Miller apostrophizes the Dadaists, the Surrealists and the seekers and prophets of the "marvelous," wherever they may be found. Perhaps because he discovered the avant-gardists so late in life, he is naïve enough to take their system of verbal ferocity at its face value and to adopt their self-inflationary mannerisms and outcries. At the same time he likes to associate himself with D. H. Lawrence, who was not at all an avant-gardist in the Parisian-group sense of the term. He apparently regards himself as Lawrence's successor. But the truth is that they have very little in common, and there is no better way of showing it than by comparing their approaches to the sexual theme.

Miller is above all morally passive, whereas Lawrence, though he too was overwhelmed by the "alienation" of modern man, was sustained throughout his life by his supreme gift for moral activity; and he was sufficiently high-visioned to believe that a change of heart was possible, that he could reverse the current that had so long been running in one direction. Hence his idea of sexual fulfilment as a means of reintegration. Miller, however, in whose work sex forms the main subject matter, presents sexual relations almost without exception in terms of fornication, which are precisely the terms that Lawrence simply loathed. The innumerable seductions, so casual and joyless, that Miller describes with such insistence on reproducing all the ribald and obscene details, are almost entirely on the level of street encounters. He has none of Molly Bloom's earthiness, nor does he ever quake with Lawrence's holy tremors. He treats erotic functions with a kind of scabrous humor, for there is scarcely any feeling in him for the sex-partner as a human being. What he wants is once and for all to expose "the conjugal orgy in the Black Hole of Calcutta." Not that he is open to the charge of pornography; on the contrary, behind his concentration on sexual experience there is a definite literary motive, or rather a double motive: first, the use of this experience to convey a sense of cultural and social disorder, to communicate a nihilist outlook, and second, an insatiable naturalistic curiosity. It is plain that Lawrence and Miller are opposites rather than twins.

Miller's claims as a guide to life and letters or as a prophet of doom can be easily discounted, though one remembers an essay by him on Proust and Joyce, called "The Universe of Death," which is a truly inspired piece of criticism. He is remarkable, however,

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as the biographer of the hobo-intellectual and as the poet of those people at the bottom of society in whom some unforeseen or surreptitious contact with art and literature has aroused a latent antagonism to ordinary living, a resolve to escape the treadmill even at the cost of hunger and degradation. In dealing with this material, Miller has performed a new act of selection. There is in his fiction, also, a Dickensian strain of caricature which comes to the surface again and again, as in the extremely funny monologues of the journalists Carl and Van Norden in "Tropic of Cancer." The truth is that his bark is worse than his bite. He strikes the attitude of a "wild man," but what he lacks is the murderous purity and logic of his European prototypes. Though he can be as savage as Céline, he is never so consistent; and the final impression we have of him is that of a naturally genial American who has been through hell.[1]

PHILIP RAHV

# Mozart and Salieri

*This dramatic poem by Pushkin is based on the legend that Salieri poisoned Mozart out of jealousy. It is to literature what "Die Meistersinger" is to music: the classical dramatization of the conflict between natural genius and accomplished mediocrity. This conflict we have always with us, and Salieri never fails from age to age to perform his appointed role, whether as critic, academician, professor or successful second-rate artist (note that he takes the point of view that he is performing a public service in protecting a vested interest, and that he allows himself to enjoy Mozart's music only after he has made sure that he has killed him). This wonderful little study is always* à propos; *and it has never before been properly translated.* – E. W.

SCENE 1. *A room.*

SALIERI. They say there is no justice on the earth.
I know now there is none in Heaven. Plain
As seven simple notes! I have loved the art
From birth; when I was but a little child
In our old church and the organ boomed sublimely,
I listened and was lost—shedding delicious
Involuntary tears. I turned away
From foolish pastimes early; found repellent
All studies foreign to my music—ay,
From all I turned with obstinate disdain,
Determined thence to dedicate myself
To music, music only. The start is hard,
The first steps make dull going. I surmounted
The initial obstacles; I grounded firmly
That craft that makes the pedestal for art;
A craftsman I became: I trained my fingers
To dry obedient proficiency,
Brought sureness to my ear. Stunning the sounds,
I cut up music like a corpse; I tested
The laws of harmony by mathematics.
Then only, rich in learning, dared I yield
To blandishments of sweet creative fancy.
I dared compose—but silently, in secret,
Nor could I venture yet to dream of glory.
How often, in my solitary cell,
Having toiled for days, having sat unbroken hours,
Forgetting food and sleep, and having tasted
The rapture and the tears of inspiration,
I'd burn my work and coldly watch the flame
As my own melodies and meditations
Flared up and smoked a little and were gone.
Nay, even more: when the great Gluck appeared,
When he unveiled to us new marvels, deep
Enchanting marvels—did I not forsake
All I had known and loved so well and trusted?
Did I not follow him with eager stride,
Obedient as one who'd lost his way
And met a passerby who knew the turning?
By dint of stubborn steadfast perseverance
Upon the endless mountainside of art
I reached at last a lofty level. Fame
Smiled on me; and I found in others' hearts
Responses to the sounds I had assembled.
Came happy days; in quiet I enjoyed
Work and success and fame—enjoying also
The works and the successes of my friends,
My comrades in that art divine we served.
Oh, never did I envy know. Nay, never!
Not even when Piccinni found a way
To captivate the ears of savage Paris—
Not even when I heard for the first time
The plangent opening strains of "Iphigenia."
Is there a man alive who'll say Salieri
Has ever stooped to envy—played the snake
That, trampled underfoot, still writhes and bites
The gravel and the dust in helpless spite?
Not one! . . . Yet now—I needs must say it—now
I am an envious man. I envy—deeply,
To agony, I envy.—Tell me, Heaven!
Where now is justice when the holiest gift,
When genius and its immortality,
Come not as a reward for fervent love,
For abnegation, prayer and dogged labor—
But lights its radiance in the head of folly,
Of idle wantonness? . . . Oh, Mozart, Mozart!

*Mozart enters.*

MOZART. Aha! you saw me! I was just preparing
To take you by surprise—a little joke.
SALIERI. You here?—When did you come?
MOZART. This very minute.
I was on my way to you to show you something
When, just as I passed a tavern, all at once
I heard a fiddle. . . . Oh, my dear Salieri!
You never in your life heard anything
So funny. . . . That blind fiddler in a pothouse
Playing *Voi che sapete.* Marvelous!
I simply had to bring him here to have you
Enjoy his art.—Step in!

*A blind old man with a violin comes in.*

[1] Mr. Rahv, when he wrote the above article, had not read Mr. Milller's unpublished book on Greece from which an excerpt is printed on page 576. This book represents a new phase in the author's development.

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Some Mozart, please!

*The old man plays the aria from "Don Giovanni"; Mozart roars with laughter.*

SALIERI. And you can laugh?
MOZART. Oh, come, can't you?
SALIERI. I cannot.
I am not amused by miserable daubers
Who make a mess of Raphael's Madonna;
I am not amused by despicable zanies
Whose parodies dishonor Alighieri.
Be off, old man.
MOZART. Wait: here's some money for you—
You'll drink my health.

*The old man goes out.*

It seems to me, Salieri,
You're out of sorts today. I'll come to see you
Some other time.
SALIERI. What have you brought?
MOZART. Oh, nothing—
A trifle. My insomnia last night
Was troubling me, and one or two ideas
Entered my head. Today I dashed them down.
I wanted your opinion; but just now
You're in no mood for me.
SALIERI. Ah, Mozart! Mozart!
When is my mood averse to you? Sit down.
I'm listening.
MOZART *(at the piano)*. I want you to imagine . . .
Whom shall we say? . . . well, let's suppose myself
A little younger—and in love—not deeply,
But just a little—sitting with a damsel
Or with a bosom friend—yourself, let's say—
I am merry. . . . All at once: a ghostly vision,
A sudden gloom, or something of the sort . . .
Well, this is how it goes.

*He plays.*

SALIERI. You were bringing this,
And you could stop to linger at a tavern
To listen to a blind man with a fiddle!
Ah, Mozart, you are unworthy of yourself.
MOZART. You like it, do you?
SALIERI. What profundity!
What daring and what grace! Why, you're a god,
And do not know it; but *I* know, *I* know.
MOZART. What, really? Maybe so . . . If so, His Godhead
Is beginning to be hungry.
SALIERI. Listen, Mozart:
Let's dine together at the Golden Lion.
MOZART. A capital idea. But let me first
Go home a moment: I must tell my wife
She's not to wait for me.

*He goes.*

SALIERI. Don't fail me now.
—Nay, now can I no longer fight with fate:
My destiny's to stop him—else we perish,
We all, the priests, the ministers of music,
Not I alone with my dull-sounding fame . . .
What worth are we if Mozart lives and reaches
New summits still? Will this exalt our art?
Nay: art will sink so soon as he departs:
He will leave us no successor—will have served
No useful purpose. Like a seraph swooping,
He brought us certain songs from Paradise,
Only to stab us, children of the dust,
With helpless wingless longing, and fly off!
—So fly away!—the sooner now, the better.

Here's poison: the last gift of my Isora.
For eighteen years I've kept it, let it season—
And often life would seem to me a wound
Too bitter to be borne—I have often sat
With some unwary enemy at table,
Yet never did that inward whisper win me,
Though I'm no coward and feel insult deeply,
And care not much for life. Still did I tarry,
Tormented by the thirst for death, yet brooding:
Why should I die? Perchance the future yet
Holds unexpected benefits; perchance
I may be visited by Orphic rapture,
My night of inspiration and creation;
Perchance another Haydn may achieve
Some great new thing—and I shall live in him. . . .
While I was feasting with some hated guest,
Perchance, I'd muse, I'll find an enemy
More hateful still; perchance a sharper insult
May come to blast me from a prouder eminence
—*Then* you will not be lost, Isora's gift!
And I was right! At last I have encountered
My perfect enemy: another Haydn
Has made me taste divine delight! The hour
Draws nigh at last, most sacred gift of love:
You'll pass tonight into the cup of friendship.

SCENE 2. *A private room in a tavern, with a piano. Mozart and Salieri at table.*

SALIERI. What makes you look so gloomy?
MOZART. I gloomy? No.
SALIERI. Mozart there's surely something on your mind.
The dinner's good, the wine is excellent,
But you, you frown and brood.
MOZART. I must confess it:
I'm worried about my Requiem.
SALIERI. Oh, you're writing
A Requiem? Since when?
MOZART. Three weeks or so.
But the queer part . . . didn't I tell you?
SALIERI. No.
MOZART. Well, listen:
Three weeks ago I got home rather late—
They told me someone had been there to see me.
All night—I don't know why—I lay and wondered
Who it could be and what he wanted of me.
Next day the same thing happened: the man came;
Again he didn't find me. The third day
I was playing on the floor with my small boy;

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There came a knock: they called me, and I went;
A man, black-coated, with a courteous bow,
Ordered a Requiem and disappeared.
So I sat down at once and started writing.
Now from that day to this my man in black
Has never come again.—Not that I mind:
I hate the thought of parting with my work,
Though now it's ready. Yet in the meantime I . . .

SALIERI. You what?

MOZART. I'm ashamed to say it.

SALIERI. To say what?

MOZART. I am haunted by that man, that man in black.
He never leaves me day or night. He follows
Behind me like a shadow. Even now
I seem to see him sitting here with us,
Making a third.

SALIERI. Come, come! what childish terrors!
Dispel these hollow fancies. Beaumarchais
Was wont to say to me: "Look here, old friend,
When black thoughts trouble you, uncork a bottle
Of bright champagne, or reread "Figaro."

MOZART. Yes, you and Beaumarchais were boon companions,
Of course—you wrote "Tarare" for Beaumarchais.
A capital thing—especially one tune—
I always find I hum it when I'm gay:
Ta-tá, ta-tá . . . Salieri, was it true
That Beaumarchais once poisoned someone?

SALIERI. No:
I doubt it. He was much too droll a fellow
For such a trade.

MOZART. And then he was a genius
Like you and me. And villainy and genius
Are two things that don't go together, do they?

SALIERI. You think so?

*He empties the poison into Mozart's glass.*

Drink your wine.

MOZART. Your health, dear friend:
Here's to the frank and loyal brotherhood
Of Mozart and Salieri, sons of Harmony.

*He drinks.*

SALIERI. Wait, wait! You've drunk it off. You've left me out.

MOZART *(throwing his napkin on the table)*. Enough: I've eaten.

*He goes to the piano.*

Listen to this, Salieri:
My Requiem.

*He plays.*

Are you weeping?

SALIERI. These are tears
I've never shed before—painful yet anodyne,
As if I had discharged a heavy debt,
As if the surgeon's knife had lopped away
A sick and throbbing limb! These tears, dear Mozart . . .
You must not mind them. Oh, play on, make haste,
Flooding my soul with sound.

MOZART. If all could feel
Like you the force of harmony! But no:
The world would crumble then; for none would care
To bother with the baser needs of life;
Then all would seek art's franchise. We are few,
The chosen ones, the happy idlers, we
Who have no use for what is merely useful,
Who worship only beauty—do we not,
Dear friend?—But I'm not well—some leaden languor . . .
I must have sleep. Adieu!

SALIERI. Until we meet.

*Alone.*

Your sleep will be a long one, Mozart!—Nay,
It cannot be that what he said was true,
And I no genius. Villainy and genius,
Two things that do not go together. Wait:
That's false—for surely there was Buonarroti.
—Or is that but a legend, but a lie,
Bred by the stupid mob, by their inane
Vulgarity, and that great soul who wrought
The Vatican had never sunk to murder?

ALEXANDER PUSHKIN
Translated by Vladimir Nabokov

# War Poetry Then and Now

IN THE FOURTH SCENE of that moving and muddled drama, "There Shall Be No Night," Miranda Valkonen says to the young American soldier-poet: "When I was a young girl my greatest hero was Rupert Brooke. Maybe now that you're here—and have all this experience—maybe you'll write as he did." The young man demurs: "I'm afraid I could never write like Rupert Brooke even if I were that good. He was always singing of the heroism of war." "And you see it as unheroic?" "Yes, Mrs. Valkonen, I do." It is doubtful whether many young American poets would confess to an admiration for Brooke. Moreover, it was before Brooke had had any experience of war that he glorified it in verse. Had he lived, his disillusion might have found an expression that would have won him the suffrage of the moderns. In any event, it is certain that the attitude of the poets of 1941 is different from that of the poets of 1914.

The men who descended into the trenches a quarter of a century ago went with a profound ignorance of what they were to face, and with a serene, if vague, sense of what they were defending. A good deal of the verse written at the start of the conflict came from the Georgians. Its tone was quiet, its manner traditional, and it was marked by a tenacious trust in a rural economy, governing a rural habit of mind. It was the land, the dear English earth, that received the tribute of the poets repeatedly in those first months. When Brooke wrote:

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> If I should die, think only this of me:
> That there's some corner of a foreign field
> That is forever England,

he was imagining a transubstantiation of that foreign soil into English dust. Masefield's "August, 1914" begins, typically, with a picture of a quiet cornfield at night, and bespeaks the faith that "above these fields a spirit broods . . . A sense . . . Of the lone Downland . . . Loved to the death." Even Ford Madox Ford (then Hueffer), for all his sympathy with outlandish fashions, spoke of love of one's land as "a flame . . . a madness . . . the great passion of your life."

Some of the most lyrical voices were silenced abruptly. Wilfred Owen, who has achieved the distinction of an "ancestor," was killed just one week before the Armistice. He lived long enough to see of what shoddy stuff the glory that had enchanted Brooke was made. He never quite overcame a Keatsian lushness, but he was a fine technician, whose experiments were to prove useful to later men, and whose grave quiet lines expressed the horrors, the anguish, the disgust that he shared with his more outspoken fellows. In the fragmentary notes that prefaced his posthumous book, he insisted that its subject was "War, and the pity of War," and that the poet's first duty was to be truthful. That is the burden of his most memorable poem, "Strange Meeting," which gains pathos if not impressiveness from being unfinished. Pity was a recurrent note in the war poems of Wilfred Wilson Gibson, pity and an unblinking candor. Robert Graves set down with grim verisimilitude a picture of a dead Boche that was "a certain cure for lust of blood," and prophesied more bluntly than Owen that a new war was coming, which "new foul tricks unguessed before" would "win and justify."

With greater violence, Siegfried Sassoon poured into his verse a hot recital of the vileness he had witnessed, a savage indictment of "the fierce, and bald, and short of breath," who speeded "glum heroes up the line to death." More sensitive to the wrongs he wanted to castigate than to the technique that would most surely convey his feeling, his verse, if not great, has the effectiveness of passionate sincerity. The bitterness of his satire was to be a strong element in the draughts compounded by better craftsmen. The spiritual and physical horrors of war were the chief themes of those who spoke as soldiers first and as poets afterwards. Scarcely any looked into the deeper causes of the evil. A notable exception is Alan Porter, who wrote as early as May, 1917:

> Vain are the wounds, vain is the sorrow, vain
> Courage and sacrifice and hope and death.
> Peace is the subtler countenance of war,
> The two one witness. When the world's at peace,
> Peace shall be poverty and wounds and sorrow,
> Courage and sacrifice and hope and death.

The major poets had little to say. Yeats had declared that he thought it better "that in times like these A poet's mouth be silent." Pound devoted two pages of "Mauberley" to the pitiless truth:

> Died some, pro patria,
> non "dulce" non "et decor" . . .
> walked eye-deep in hell
> believing in old men's lies, then unbelieving
> came home, home to a lie,
> home to many deceits,
> home to old lies and new infamy;
> usury age-old and age-thick
> and liars in public places.

Eliot, stumbling through the pocked Wasteland, spoke not of war, but of its "subtler countenance," examining, as his successors were to do with more sardonic solicitude, the blemishes on the face of peace, the nervous tic of her eye, the paralytic grin. For the most part the Americans, who had been removed from the struggle for years, were neither so elated about the adventure that war promised nor so promptly disillusioned. Sandburg, one of the more vocal, wrote in an elegiac strain about the men on their long job of killing, "Fixed in the drag of the world's heartbreak," not without hope that the kings would be "kicked under the dust" and the common man would fight in another war for "great causes not yet dreamed." Frost, building his bonfire of brushwood that illumined so sharply the New England scene, paused to observe: "*War is for everyone, for children too,*" and then went on with his quiet labors. It was only after the peace to end peace was signed that the younger men, following Eliot on his stony pilgrimage, cried out, now in accents of suppressed hysteria, now in the subdued tones of despair, against the world of grotesque paradoxes, crazy shames and gutted values that the war had bequeathed to the victors as well as to the vanquished.

Those poets who grew up in the post-war years, too young to have suffered from the painful readjustments required of their seniors, not carrying their burden of deluded hopes, faced the task before them with youth's aggressiveness and youth's wistfulness. Alive to the techniques of Yeats, Pound and Eliot, of Owen and their greater "ancestor" Hopkins, they explored the wasteland with a will to clear away the wreckage and build the new Jerusalem in England's green and pleasant land. Such poets as Louis MacNeice, C. Day Lewis, W. H. Auden and Stephen Spender went to school to the Social Muse, but having studied Freud as well as Marx, they were concerned not merely with the establishment of a new order, but also with the necessity for defeating the self-regarding, inverted attitude that, as younger members of "the Old Gang," they were themselves inclined to adopt. Their medicine for a diseased society, their weapon against their own weaknesses, was satire, although even Auden's buffoonery gradu-

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ally gave place to a more searching and sensitive attack upon the evils around and within.

It was not long, however, before these poets, and the Americans who were their fellow travelers, confronted the fact that they were living not in a post-war but in a pre-war, and suddenly in a war-ridden, world. They had looked for revolution. They expected fighting. Their verse, even when it deals with more private matters, abounds in the imagery of modern warfare: severed wires, tangled scrap-iron, spies, airmen. But though they could imagine, they were not prepared for, a war in which the aims would be as obscure, and the line-up of forces as ambiguous as in this one. A short anthology of recent verse for these times written by English poets bears an Address to the Reader in which he is told that "This war must be *thought* to a finish: it concerns thinkers as no other war ever did." It has not yet been thought through, and this may well be one of the reasons why the poets, aware of that necessity, unable to formulate their position, tend to withdraw into a private corner, to write more personal poetry than before. The anthology mentioned above opens with a poem hailing the unborn historian whose song "shall enshrine our despair, Reveal our mad story, and from its present confusion Discover the hope that guides us toward his birth." Another poet wishes today were yesterday. A third sees love and hope approach "Like tide . . . For heavy retreat." Yet another speaks of the solitude that eases bewilderment, and lets the poet forget "nations dying, And Europe without a friend." Nowhere in the book, nor in any recent poem I have read elsewhere, is there an affirmation comparable to that with which Brooke and his fellows greeted the war of 1914. Nor is there the savage indignation of the later years; only great pity and a new weariness, for boredom appears to be not the least of this war's cruelties.

There is an ancient Egyptian poem in which the singer recites the troubles that attend every sort of worker, the blacksmith, the carpenter, the fisherman, and declares: "I have seen violence, I have seen violence, give thy heart after letters." The poets of 1941 have seen violence undreamed of by the men of 1914. If they give their hearts after letters, it is because they know that poetry, though it is no substitute for anti-aircraft guns, is the stronghold of that awareness which alone gives the guns a meaning. But at this juncture the poets can do no more than celebrate awareness, and in troubled accents. Unlike their predecessors, they understand that this war is no joyous adventure, no crusade, but a dirty job, and that the winning of the war may be less difficult than the winning of the peace. The Soviet betrayal of communism more than any other one factor appals and disarms them, for if the socialist fatherland has begotten a dictatorship from which Nazism has pulled the disguise, in what shall they put their trust? They know, too, that England does not go into the fight with clean hands. Had not her rulers given aid and comfort to the enemy, the war would wear a different complexion. The poets can speak only out of their bewilderment and pain, unless and until the war aims are declared, and proved to answer the needs of the common man and the desires of the just.

BABETTE DEUTSCH

# Conrad: The Secret Sharer[1]

ON January 6, 1908, Conrad wrote these sentences in a letter to Galsworthy:

*Et le misérable écrivait toujours.*

He is writing now a story the title of which is "Razumov." Isn't it expressive? I think that I am trying to capture the very soul of things Russian—*Cosas de Russia.* It is not an easy work but it may be rather good when it's done. . . .

Listen to the theme. The Student Razumov (a natural son of a Prince K.) gives up secretly to the police his fellow student, Haldin, who seeks refuge in his rooms after committing a political crime (supposed to be the murder of de Plehve). First movement in St. Petersburg. (Haldin is hanged, of course.)

Second in Genève. The Student Razumov meeting abroad the mother and sister of Haldin falls in love with that last, marries her and, after a time, confesses to her the part he played in the arrest of her brother.

The psychological developments leading to Razumov's betrayal of Haldin, to the confession of the fact to his wife and to the death of these people (brought about mainly by the resemblance of their child to the late Haldin), form the real subject of the story.

And perhaps no magazine will touch it. . . . Ah, my dear, you don't know what an inspiration-killing anxiety it is to think: "Is it salable?" There's nothing more cruel than to be caught between one's impulse, one's act, and that question, which for me simply is a question of life and death. There are moments when the mere fear sweeps my head clean of every thought. It is agonizing—no less. And—you know—that pressure grows from day to day instead of getting less.

But I had to write it. I had to get away from "Chance," with which I was making no serious progress.

Otherwise things are not well with me. "The Secret Agent" may be pronounced by now an honorable failure. It brought me neither love nor promise of literary success. I own that I am cast down. I suppose I am a fool to have expected anything else. I suppose there is something in me that is unsympathetic to the general public—because the novels of Hardy, for instance, are generally tragic enough and gloomily written too—and yet they have sold in their time and are selling to the present day.

Foreignness, I suppose.

All this is matter for anxious thought. . . .

This letter communicates a state of mind and creative ordeal that by 1908 had become habitual with Con-

[1] Part of a long study of Conrad's life, novels and ideas.

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rad; it combines his temperamental condition of creative doubt and despair with a description of a fictional conception, then in an early stage of emergence, which was to draw intimately on his own career's havoc and conflicts. Two years later, on December 23, 1909, we find him still laboring at the book and writing to Norman Douglas: "The novel hangs on the last 12,000 words, but there's neither inspiration nor hope in my work. It's mere hard labor for life—with this difference, that the life convict is at any rate out of harm's way—and may consider the account with his conscience closed; and this is not the case with me. I envy the serene fate and the comparative honesty of the gentlemen in gray who live in Dartmoor. I do really. I am not half as decent or half as useful. . . . All the same, don't give me up in your thoughts entirely. In the light of a 'tormented spirit' I am not to be altogether despised."

It was almost two more years before the novel finally appeared on October 5, 1911, not, of course, under the title Conrad gave to Galsworthy, but as "Under Western Eyes," a change which, in indicating a shift in the post of observation from the hero to a disinterested spectator (the old English teacher of languages in Geneva who tells the story) and to a critical attitude alien and largely hostile or incomprehensible to the Russian, tells much of the narrative method Conrad had by this time perfected and outside of which he did not often trust himself. The title was not the only thing about the book that had been changed. The plot as outlined to Galsworthy was also transformed. Conrad, if we are to follow the words of friends like Ford and Curle or of his own letters, seldom outlined or schematized a book in advance. He pondered, brooded, lived and slept with it, immersed himself in its mood and passion, began writing, and so moved, sensibly, forcibly, almost physically, into the impulse and element of the tale word by word. Apparently he did so in this case, and what resulted is a novel that illustrates his traits and motives more obviously than the feats of massive balancing and construction which he encompassed in "Nostromo" and "Victory," the extreme complexity of "Chance," or the twenty-year ordeal of baffled effort and repeated frustrations that finally yielded "The Rescue."

The obvious differences between its plot and the one Conrad first conceived are that Razumov and Natalie never marry, never have a child who resembles the dead Haldin and thus "brings about" the deaths of these people, and that the "psychological developments" which Conrad planned as leading to the marriage and these deaths were radically altered to take a different direction and to arrive at fundamentally different effects and purposes. What we have is a typical, an almost archetypically extreme, example of Conrad's fictional method and of the processes of imagination and realization, developing both from his personal experience and from his conscious esthetic purposes, that gave that method its validity in his own eyes. Conrad has been generally recognized as an innovator and experimentalist in modern literature; his characteristic devices as a narrator—the time-shift, the plot-inversion and dislocation, the repetition of motifs, the use of interlocutors and other agencies for realistic, analytical or translated observation, his highly specialized employment of indirection—have become matters for academic exercises. What has been largely overlooked, even by Mr. Edward Crankshaw in his interesting study, is that these devices in Conrad originated in something different from the conscious reform and manipulation of fictional methods in most experimental writers since Flaubert and James. They originated in profoundly habitual, deeply ingrained, almost incurably obsessional tendencies of his character, and in the events of his experience that confirmed the original qualities of his temperament: his childhood spent in the circles of the Polish revolutionary movement, his attraction toward Western Europe, his desertion of Poland, his escapades in France, his entry into the British merchant marine, his restless attraction toward literature, his sudden and unprepared adoption of the writing profession which threw him out of the comparative security of his sea-berths into a hostile world of literary professionalism just when his Polish family ties were dissolved by a series of deaths and when his own isolation in Western Europe, emphasized in its responsibilities by his English marriage, brought to a crisis both the naturally irresolute, distracted, conscientiously high-strung qualities of his personality and the almost brutally insistent sense of personal pride and honor that was lodged within it.

Conrad's letter to Galsworthy shows that he conceived the story of "Under Western Eyes" in strongly active terms: as embodied in physical encounters and externalized dramatic conflict of an almost melodramatic tendency. (From what we know of his early schemes for "Lord Jim," "The Rescue" and "The Arrow of Gold," those novels resulted in attenuations of similarly dramatic original concepts.) But the more he pondered it, the more he came to grips with the actual writing of it, the less he was able to adhere to an objective dramatization of his idea. Once the writing of a book began, Conrad's originally vigorous conception of it seemed to dissolve. His ponderous imaginative processes were forced from their inertia by a haphazard, precipitous mode of composition, and we can see what Ford meant when he said that Conrad could write a novel down only by beginning with the first word of the story and proceeding, word by word, with whatever laborious revisions and changes of tactics, until he reached the end. Conrad himself gave repeated evidence of the prolonged ordeal of immersion in a story's idea and mood that preceded the setting of words to paper, and of the almost frenzied compulsion he found necessary to transfer that modal

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saturation to paper. At one point in the nineties, when his career was just beginning, he wrote to his cousin Mme. Poradowska in Brussels: "I must go out sometimes, alas! I begrudge each minute I spend away from paper. I do not say 'from pen,' because I write very little, but inspiration comes to me in looking at the paper. Then there are soaring flights; my thought goes wandering through vast spaces filled with shadowy forms. All is yet chaos, but, slowly, the apparitions change into living flesh, the shimmering mists take shape, and—who knows?—something may be born of the clash of nebulous ideas." And again: "You know that when I am not well I have attacks of melancholy which paralyze my mind and will. I have often thought, though, of you and your book—*the book* to be. Once the general idea is settled on, you must let yourself be led by the inspiration of the moment. You are too much of an artist to go astray. *You* may be afraid of groping about in a blind alley, but *I*, who judge you 'from without,' am entirely unfearful of seeing you take a wrong turn. I have the utmost confidence in your inspiration, while I nevertheless realize that your doubts, your hesitation, are quite natural. How well I know them. . . !" He was obliged to submit himself to an almost purely empirical mode of imaginative realization; every new book was begun as if he had never written a book before. The terrifying desertion of his inspiration that followed the completion of a manuscript made him believe, as when he had finished "Typhoon" and not yet begun "Nostromo," "that there was nothing more in the world to write about."

These crises of exhaustion, corresponding closely to the depressive phases of his emotional life, seem to have recurred repeatedly. When he took up a new theme, he often did so because he stumbled on it accidentally—found it in a suggestion of apparently minute inadequacy as compared with the complex book that finally resulted, but illustrating what James called that "odd law by which the minimum of valid suggestion always serves the man of imagination better than the maximum." To that suggestion he submitted himself for a long period of gestation that seems, from his own accounts, to have been of an almost will-less and trancelike passivity. He made himself the registering medium of what, in "Chance," he speaks of as "the irresistible pressure of imaginary griefs, crushing conscience, scruples, prudence, under their ever expanding volume," and of "the somber and venomous irony in the obsession." He gave himself up to "that complete mastery of one fixed idea, not a reasonable but an emotional mastery, a sort of concentrated exaltation. Under its empire men rush blindly through fire and water and opposing violence, and nothing can stop them—unless, sometimes, a grain of sand." At one point in "Chance" Marlow pauses to ask his listener, "You understand?" and the listener says: "Perfectly, . . . You are the expert in the psychological wilderness. This is like one of those Redskin stories where the noble savages carry off a girl and the honest backwoodsman with his incomparable knowledge follows the track and reads the signs of her fate in a footprint here, a broken twig there, a trinket dropped by the way. I have always liked such stories. Go on!"

Conrad's state of mind combined the inexhaustible impressionability of his seamen with their canny disillusionment. "A turn of mind composed of innocence and skepticism is common to them all," he once said, "with the addition of an unexpected insight into motives, as of disinterested lookers-on at a game." As a novelist he submitted to the passive fascination of his conjurings at the same moment that he was tormented by the labor and responsibility of reconciling them to the reality of words. He repeatedly shared with young Powell (again in "Chance") that "moment of incredulity as to the truth of his own conviction because it had failed to affect the safe aspect of familiar things. He doubted his eyes too. He must have dreamt it all! 'I am dreaming now,' he said to himself. And very likely for a few seconds he must have looked like a man in a trance or profoundly asleep on his feet, and with a glass of brandy-and-water in his hand." Conrad was continually fascinated by the dreamlike unreality of experience, by the terror of the awakenings which personal crises bring about in a man's life, by the power of the dream to appal and defeat a man's conscious efforts to control or understand it. His life was poised between the world of phantasms and impossible desires and the world of brutal facts—the fact of his isolation, of his poverty, of his family, of the next book that had to be written to keep the wolf from the door. Three proverbs seem to have haunted him all his life. His wife and his friends tell us that he murmured them habitually. They shade into and out of his pages. One was "Life is a dream"; the second, "All things belong to the young"; the third, "*Tout passe, tout lasse.*" They condense the temperamental, the moral, possibly even the esthetic attitudes of his character.

Miss Elizabeth Bowen once said that Conrad's way of projecting a dramatic concept was not by means of a development but by means of a soaking, and this conveys a quality in his work that no attentive reader is likely to overlook—the verbal, modal and atmospheric saturation to which the narrative idea is subjected, and the equally exhaustive wringing out or draining out of the whole content of motive and consciousness that has been induced into the idea. The act of composition in Conrad took place between two contradictory impulses—the one instinctive, apparently casual, tentative, unmethodical, and yet intensely and violently absorbed; the other analytical, cautious, scrupulously calculating, with checkings and delayings of action, regressions of impulse, retracing and challenging of motives, and with a complicated exercise of the mode

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of averted suspense which the Renaissance rhetoricians used to call *occupatio*. On the one hand his method reminds us of the one which Percy Lubbock ascribes to Dickens in "The Craft of Fiction": "Dickens' way of dealing with his romantic intrigues was to lead gradually into them, through well populated scenes of character and humor; so that his world is actual, its air familiar, by the time that his plot begins to thicken. He gives himself an ample margin in which to make the impression of the kind of truth he needs, before beginning to concentrate upon the fabulous action of the climax. 'Bleak House' is a very good case. . . . A broad stream of diversified life moves slowly in a certain direction, so deliberately at first that its scope, its spread, is much more evident than its movement. . . . Presently we are in the thick of the story, hurrying to the catastrophe, without having noticed at all, it may be, that our novel of manners has turned into a romantic drama, with a mysterious crime to crown it. . . . The chief characteristic I take to be this careful introduction of violent drama into a scene already prepared to vouch for it—a scene so alive, so queer, that almost anything might happen there naturally."

But the devious, peripheral exploration of a situation in Conrad—an exploration heightened in casual realism and persuasiveness by the use of conversational narration put into the mouth of a speaker who usually stumbles upon the drama by chance—was counterbalanced by his rigorous sense of form, by his detestation of the crude chronological machinery of the ordinary novel, and perhaps chief of all by his prodigious curiosity about the sources of action in the moral scruples, the buried psychic forces and the expiatory or recriminative processes of the human conscience. Conrad has told us too much about his own nature and history in his letters to keep us from ascribing this curiosity to the agonized ordeal of his own conscience—a conscience profoundly susceptible at best but intensified and made painfully luminous by the events of his own history. His congenital impulsiveness in actions and enthusiasms was repeatedly and brutally checked by acute principles of honor and sincerity. His sense of guilt in deserting Poland and his family's part in the revolutionary cause there haunted him for years, and though we may not agree fully with Gustav Morf's analysis of this guilt in the plot of "Lord Jim," the sense of such a guilt was unquestionably sublimated into his novels. They convey the ambivalence of his own impulses in their conflicts between precipitous action or the romantic delusions of an untested idealism and the agonized processes of moral recognition and the tests of sincerity. He himself offers in his letters an unmistakable case of introverted sensibility aggravated toward manic-depressive tendencies from which only an appalling and heroic exercise of will power could rescue him for the writing of his books. It was that heroism—expressed in acts of expiation, self-vindication or secret moral salvation—which he confers upon his character-


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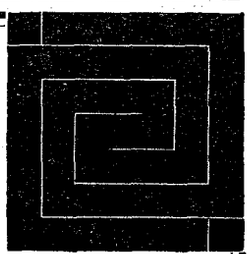

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istic heroes, and he made it their distinguishing mark among the characters of modern fiction.

Some years ago, put to the necessity of expressing Conrad's central theme in a single sentence for another context, I ventured to say that it was "the human illusion of values, compelled out of negation or despair by the mortal necessity of action and sacrifice." This may be elaborated here. Conrad's stories usually present their dramatic and moral situations at a stage of crisis. If an epic regression to origins or backgrounds is needed, it is presented after the crisis is introduced or very rapidly precipitated. This crisis, being by its nature a static or fixed moment in a sequence of events, is held by Conrad under exhausting scrutiny while every element in it—moral, conscious and unconscious, external and subjective, essential or peripheral—is wrung out of it by a series of checks, interrogations, challenges, pathetic searchings, recoveries of concealed or forgotten or subconscious motives. To make this arrestment of action credible two things were usually needed: first, an extra-dramatic point of vantage and curiosity (a sensitive but detached observer like the old professor in "Under Western Eyes," a disillusioned but probing and sympathetic intelligence like Marlow); and second, a central character of acutely self-conscious or morbidly activated faculties comparable to Conrad's own—Lord Jim, Flora de Barral, Heyst, Razumov. It must be noted, moreover, that these characters exist, in their various states of crisis, in the clutches of some psychic condition or obsession particularly conducive to the exhaustive dissections of conscience. In Lord Jim and Razumov the pathology is that of remorse over a criminal, treacherous or self-betraying action; in Flora de Barral and Heyst it is the horrified personal shame or the disillusioning disgust, tending toward nihilism, that follows a misplaced idealistic confidence in life; in Almayer, Willems and Kurtz it is defeat; in Lingard and Mrs. Travers it is a condition of psychic *accidia*, the plight of dispossessed middle age, "standing alone, at the end of time, on the brink of days." In the hero of the patently autobiographical story "The Shadow Line," it is the moment of crucial transition from youthful illusion when it is "the privilege" of a man "to live in advance of [his] days in all the beautiful continuity of hope which knows no pauses and no introspection" to the abrupt realization of his isolation as an individual, his responsibility, his conscious selfhood. What precipitates these states of crisis varies from the taking of one's first command to the falling upon one's life of a mortal blow to security or reputation; from the making of an unpremeditated but inescapable mistake to the secret or public violation of one's good name.

Once the crisis is established, there are certain conditions necessary to render it available to a treatment that counterpoises dramatic against anti-dramatic effects, action against analysis, moral salvation against abstraction or the fatal skepticism that induces, as its logical and tragic culmination, the state of nihilism. They appear in almost all of Conrad's longer books. The central character must be alone in the world. His plight must, however, have public references or consequences; no man is finally alone. But the true origin, the secret nature, of his plight must remain concealed, secret, discoverable even to himself only by the most gradual and scrupulously tested degrees of awareness. And there must exist in that character and in the milieu in which he moves a recognized principle of honor. It is this principle of honor, its personal claims precipitated by an incentive action or betraying accident, that binds the private agony of a Conrad hero to the outer world of values and proofs. It brings into the unity of a single life and an individual focus the widely divergent ramifications of judgment, surmise, chance and moral relevance in the tale. The idea of honor, operating within the acute confines of a morbid conflict, a psychic trance or a trapped sensibility, thus provides the dramatic leverage of his plots. It enables us to define what Conrad's special contribution to the form and psychological realism of the novel was. He imposed the *structure* of the psychic condition and of its moral equivalent upon the dramatic structure of the plot. He compelled dramatic action to subserve the necessities and processes of the moral sensibility, and yet he kept it—sometimes tenuously as in "Under Western Eyes," sometimes vigorously as in "Victory"—finally and redeemingly dramatic.

Once this rationale of Conrad's method is seized and its relevance to his personal history is reasonably allowed, the famous technical devices of his books take on a fresh importance. His defects and mannerisms also take on a more interesting significance. The time-shift, for instance, ceases to be a trick of form or suspense alone; it becomes an instrument of psychological realism and a normal function of conscience and memory, saved from artificiality on the dramatic level by its infinitely variable operation on the level of sensibility and instinct. The use of the narrator, whether Marlow, a diary, or a nameless interlocutor, becomes more than a device of oral verisimilitude or a means of virtuosity in wielding the "point of view"; it becomes an instrument of consciousness and a mode of sympathy, and when used as complexly as in "Chance," where the narrator is sometimes five times removed from the experience he is detailing, it becomes a device for representing sympathy and intelligence in their fullest possible complex of handicaps, prejudices, divergences and moral struggles. Conrad's style likewise becomes something less and more than his most fervent apologists present it as being: *less* because it *does* convey qualities of the *voulu*, of instability, of flaring and unconvincing arrogance and of rhetorical coquetry which seem to reflect the exotic or cavalier side of Con-

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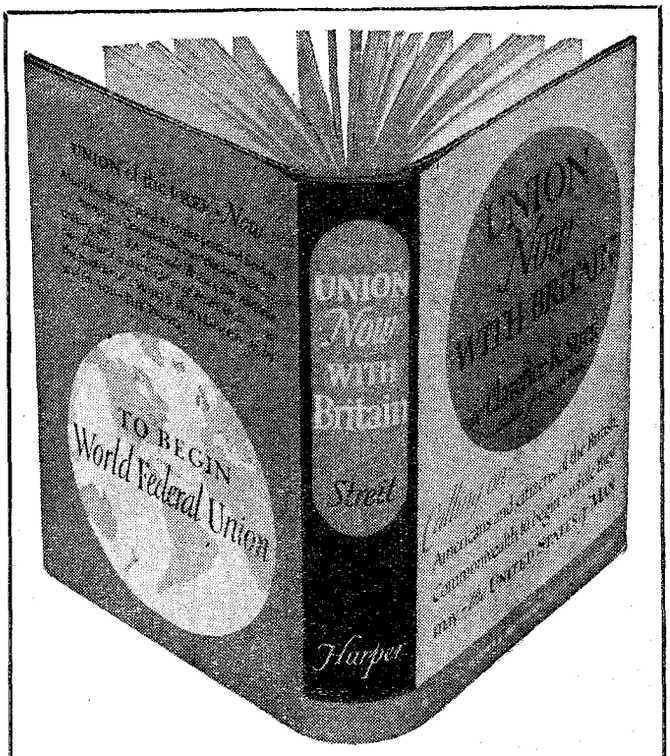
rad's nature and which were never harmonized comfortably with his inhibitions of scruple, tact and honesty; *more* because when we admit this split or ambivalence in Conrad's style we can begin to see how his greatest success came when he made genuine use of it and converted it to the expression of the inexhaustible tensions and profound ambiguity which he recognized as the essential conditions of human experience and character.

Even such a feature of his books as the repeated motif or incident (Jim's jump from the boat, Flora's suicidal appearance at the cliff's edge followed by the barking of her dog, Mrs. Schomberg's shawl in "Victory") takes on a new import, for by these repetitions Conrad went beyond the ordinary uses of the *leit-motif* by making each repetition mark the expanding realization, the advancing penetration, of his treatment of events. Every time we hear anew of Jim's jump from the boat into the "everlasting black hole" of his remorse, every time the bark of Flora's dog sounds again, every reappearance of Mrs. Schomberg's shawl, means that the significance of these irrefutable facts is deepened in a fresh consciousness, a more intense vision, of the event. It means that a fact has gained a wider periphery of relevance, and what seems to be a tied plot, gyrating aimlessly around a static point of obsession, is actually growing in meaning and moral import, and taking on an additional increment of value. Conrad worked at a time when musical devices were beginning to be used by novelists, and I think we must agree with Mr. Crankshaw that Conrad's reference to music as "the art of arts" in his artistic credo prefaced to "The Nigger of the Narcissus" indicates his conscious sense of musical possibilities in the novel and thus anticipates the experiments of Proust and Mann, and also that his exhaustive treatment of themes and motifs is comparable to the principle of nuclear analysis and elaboration that was used in such high examples of the variation form as we get in the last piano sonata and the Diabelli Variations of Beethoven.

Mr. James M. Cline has said of certain elaborately rhetorical sermons of John Donne that in them "there is no advance in thought, only a refinement of it, a deepening and a gathering intensity of realization; until finally the great period crashes to a close, still reiterating, still sustaining an incremental movement of passion and of mind." This admirable remark may be adapted with little change to the nature of Conrad's art and to the esthetic morality on which it is founded. We are concerned in Conrad with a novelist in whom the devices of arrested action, thematic repetition and incremental veracity were driven to the limits of their utility; but by the analysis thus induced the nature of illusion is probed, the residue of fact is sublimated, the operations of intelligence and consciousness are tested, until finally, out of that vaporous haze of skepticism and desperate imposture of values which were the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threats of Conrad's personal and artistic security, a hard irreducible center of moral certitude and human conviction is arrived at.

"Under Western Eyes" presents his method at its best, with an almost abstractly coherent and single-minded intention; it is probably the most consistent illustration of his special purposes as an artist. It shows that Conrad's failings in dramatic invention were fully recognized by himself, that he was serious when he said that "the sustained invention of a really telling lie demands a talent which I do not possess." It also makes clear that when Conrad made Stein say in "Lord Jim": "In the destructive element immerse, that is the way. . . . A man that is born falls into a dream like a man who falls into the sea. . . . The way is to the destructive element submit yourself, and with the exertions of your hands and feet in the water make the deep, deep sea keep you up," he was not talking about the loss or surrender of personality, as some of his modern readers seem to think. He was talking about the salvation of personality by the test of experience and the recognition of selfhood. He was perhaps talking also about the rescue of his own character from its defeats and confusions by the ordeal of his art, and he certainly was making unmistakable the means of redemption allowed to modern man when he finds it necessary to rescue himself from the willing impersonality and irresponsibly abstract faiths to which he is encouraged to surrender himself. Conrad joined hands across a great distance with Baudelaire, a poet he recognizes as a comrade in the epigraph of "The Shadow Line." He believed it is as impossible as it is futile for a man to know or save mankind in a body before he has first learned to know and save himself. "A train of thought is never false," he said. "The falsehood lies deep in the necessities of existence, in secret fears and half-formed ambitions, in the secret confidence combined with a secret mistrust of ourselves, in the love of hope and the dread of uncertain days." Between that truth and that falsehood his heroes are pitched, and out of their conflict he made his novels.

MORTON DAUWEN ZABEL

# The World and Its Life Are Her Dream

## London

The wind wore me north, London I left a year.
—When the wind blows, boy, the bough is bare.—
When I came south in summer like a goose,
Leaves were more than I found left to lose.

I came to London, what did I find there?
I found my house full and my cupboard bare,
They sold my skillets and they stole my knives,
My wives have husbands and my husbands wives.

London, London, O where are you gone?
—No place is, child, man calls his own.
He tumbles all unwilling from the womb,
He reaches for a breast and gets a bone;

He calls his father God, his mother wife,
Of all the letters he knows only *I*.
And yet at last, man, you must learn to live,
Though you want nothing but to die.

## Variations

### I

"I lived with Mr. Punch, they said my name was Judy.
I beat him with my rolling-pin, he hit me with his cane.
I ran off with a soldier, he followed in a carriage,
And he drew a big revolver and he shot me through the brain.
But that was his duty, he only did his duty—"

Said Judy, said the Judy, said poor Judy to the string.
"O hear her, just hear her!" the string said softly;
And the string and Judy, they said no more.
Yes, string or Judy, it said no more.
O they hanged Mr. Punch with a six-inch thread,
And "Clap," said the manager; "the play is over."

### II

"I lay like a swan upon the down of Heaven,
When the clouds came the rain grew
Into the rice of my palaces, the great wits
Were the zithers of my garden, I stood among sedge
And held to the peoples the gold staff of God."

Said Grace, said Good, O said the son of God.

The wives and wise, the summer's willows
Nodded and were fed by the wind; when the snow fell
And the wind's steps were pink in the pure winter—
Who spared his charcoal for the son of God,
The vain wind failing at the pass to Hell?

### III

"I lived in a room full of bears and porridge,
My mother was dead and my nurse was horrid.
I sat all day on a white china chamber,
And I lay all night in my trundle bed.
And she wasn't, she wasn't, O not a bit dead!"

The boy said, the girl said—and Nurse she said:

"I'll stew your ears all day, little hare,
Just as God ate your mother, for you are bad,
Are bad, are bad—" and the nurse is the night

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To wake to, to die in: and the day I live,
The world and its life are her dream.

IV

"I was born in a hut, my wit is heavy.
My sister died, they killed my father.
There is no time I was not hungry.
They used me, I am dying.
I stand here among graves."

The white, the yellow, the black man said.

And the world said, Child, you will not be missed.
You are cheaper than a wrench, your back is a road;
Your death is a table in a book.
You had our wit, our heart was sealed to you:
Man is the judgment of the world.

## 90 North

At home, in my flannel gown, like a bear to its floe,
I clambered to bed; up the globe's impossible sides
I sailed all night—till at last, with my black beard,
My furs and my dogs, I stood at the northern pole.

There in the childish night my companions lay frozen,
The stiff furs knocked at my starveling throat,
And I gave my great sigh—the flakes came huddling,
Were they really my end? In the darkness I turned to my rest.

Here, the flag snaps in the glare and silence
Of the unbroken ice. And I stand here,
The dogs bark, my beard is black, and I stare
At the North Pole. And now what? Why, go back.

Turn as I please, my step is to the south.
The world—my world spins on this final point
Of cold and wretchedness: all lines, all winds
End in this whirlpool I at last discover.

And it is meaningless. In the child's bed
After the night's voyage, in that warm world
Where people work and suffer till the death
That crowns the pain—in that Cloud-Cuckoo-Land
I reached my North and it had meaning.
Here at the actual pole of my existence,
Where all that I have done is meaningless,
Where I die or live by accident alone—

Where, living or dying, I am still alone;
Here where North, the night, the berg of Death
Crowd to me out of the ignorant darkness—
I see at last that all the knowledge

I wrung from the darkness—that the darkness flung me—
Is worthless as ignorance: nothing comes from nothing,
The darkness from the darkness. Pain comes from the darkness
And we call it wisdom. It is pain.

RANDALL JARRELL


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# Peroration to a Book on Greece

THE GREATEST single impression which Greece made upon me is that it is a man-sized world. Now it is true that France also conveys this impression, and yet there is a difference, a difference which is profound. Greece is the home of the gods; they may have died but their presence still makes itself felt. The gods were of human proportion: they were created out of the human spirit. In France, as elsewhere in the Western world, this link between the human and the divine is broken. The skepticism and paralysis produced by this schism in the very nature of man provide the clue to the inevitable destruction of our present civilization. If men cease to believe that they will one day become gods, then they will surely become worms.

Much has been said about a new order of life destined to arise on this American continent. It should be borne in mind, however, that not even a beginning has been visioned for at least a thousand years to come. The present way of life, which is America's, is doomed as surely as is that of Europe. No nation on earth can possibly give birth to a new order of life until a world view is established. We have learned through bitter mistakes that all the peoples of the earth *are* vitally connected, but we have not made use of that knowledge in an intelligent way. We have seen two world wars and we shall undoubtedly see a third and a fourth, possibly more. There will be no hope of peace until the old order is shattered. The world must become small again as the old Greek world was—small enough to include everybody. Until the very last man is included there will be no real human society. My intelligence tells me that such a condition of life will be a long time in coming, but my intelligence also tells me that nothing short of that will ever satisfy man. Until he has become fully human, until he learns to conduct himself as a member of the earth, he will continue to create gods who will destroy him.

The tragedy of Greece lies not in the destruction of a great culture but in the abortion of a great vision. We say erroneously that the Greeks humanized the gods. It is just the contrary. The gods humanized the Greeks. There was a moment when it seemed as if the real significance of life had been grasped, a breathless moment when the destiny of the whole human race was in jeopardy. The moment was lost in the blaze of power which engulfed the intoxicated Greeks. They made mythology of a reality which was too great for their human comprehension. We forget, in our enchantment with the myth, that it is born of reality and is fundamentally no different from any other form of creation, except that it has to do with the very quick of life. We too are creating myths, though we are perhaps not aware of it. But in our myths there is no place for the gods. We are building an abstract, dehumanized world out of the ashes of an illusory materialism. We

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are proving to ourselves that the universe is empty, a task which is justified by our own empty logic. We are determined to conquer and conquer we shall, but the conquest is death.

People seem astounded and enthralled when I speak of the effect which my visit to Greece produced upon me. They say they envy me and that they wish they could one day go there themselves. Why don't they? Because nobody can enjoy the experience he desires until he is ready for it. People seldom mean what they say. Anyone who says he is burning to do something other than what he is doing or to be somewhere else than where he is, is lying to himself. To desire is not merely to wish. To desire is to become that which one essentially is. Some men, reading this, will inevitably realize that there is nothing to do but act out their desires. A line of Maeterlinck's concerning truth and action altered my whole conception of life. It took me twenty-five years fully to awaken to the meaning of his phrase. Other men are quicker to coördinate vision and action. But the point is that in Greece I finally achieved that coördination. I became deflated, restored to proper human proportions, ready to accept my lot and prepared to give of all that I have received. Standing in Agamemnon's tomb I went through a veritable rebirth. I don't mind in the least what people think or say when they read such a statement. I have no desire to convert anyone to my way of thinking. I know now that any influence I may have upon the world will be a result of the example I set and not because of my words. I give this record of my journey not as a contribution to human knowledge, because my knowledge is small and of little account, but as a contribution to human experience.

My friend Katsimbalis for whom I have written this book, by way of showing my gratitude to him and his compatriots, will I hope forgive me for having exaggerated his proportions to that of a Colossus. Those who know Amaroussion will realize that there is nothing grandiose about the place. Neither is there anything grandiose about Katsimbalis. Neither, in the ultimate, is there anything grandiose about the entire history of Greece. But there is something colossal about any human figure when that individual becomes truly and thoroughly human. A more human individual than Katsimbalis I have never met. Walking with him through the streets of Amaroussion I had the feeling that I was walking the earth in a totally new way. The earth became more intimate, more alive, more promising. He spoke frequently of the past, it is true, not as something dead and forgotten, however, but rather as something which we carry within us, something which fructifies the present and makes the future inviting. He spoke of little things and of great with equal reverence; he was never too busy to pause and dwell on the things which moved him; he had endless time on his hands, which in itself is the mark of a great soul.

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How can I ever forget that last impression he made upon me when we said farewell at the bus station in the heart of Athens? There are men who are so full, so rich, who give themselves so completely that each time you take leave of them you feel that it is absolutely of no consequence whether the parting is for a day or forever. They come to you brimming over and they fill you to overflowing. They ask nothing of you except that you participate in their superabundant joy of living. They never inquire which side of the fence you are on, because the world they inhabit has no fences. They make themselves invulnerable by habitually exposing themselves to every danger. They grow more heroic in the measure that they reveal their weaknesses. Certainly in those endless and seemingly fabulous stories which Katsimbalis was in the habit of recounting there must have been a good element of fancy and distortion, yet even if truth was occasionally sacrificed to reality the man behind the story only succeeded thereby in revealing more faithfully and thoroughly his human image.

As I turned to go, leaving him sitting there in the bus, his alert, round eye already feasting itself upon other sights, Seferiades, who was accompanying me home, remarked with deep feeling: "He is a great fellow, Miller, there is no doubt about it: he is something extraordinary . . . a human phenomenon, I should say." He said it almost as if he Seferiades were saying farewell and not me. He knew Katsimbalis as well as one man can know another, I should imagine; he was sometimes impatient with him, sometimes irritated beyond words, sometimes downright furious, but even if he were one day to become his bitterest enemy, I could not imagine him saying one word to reduce the stature of the splendor of his friend. How wonderful it was to hear him say, knowing that I had just left Katsimbalis—"Did he tell you that story about the coins he found?" or whatever it might be. He asked with the enthusiasm of a music lover who, learning that his friend has just bought a phonograph, wishes to advise him of a record which he knows will bring his friend great joy. Often, when we were all together and Katsimbalis had launched into a long story, I caught that warm smile of recognition on Seferiades' face—that smile which informs the others that they are about to hear something which has been proved and tested and found good. Or he might say afterwards, taking me by the arm and leading me aside: "Too bad he didn't give you the whole story tonight; there is a wonderful part which he tells sometimes when he's in very good spirits—it's a pity you had to miss it." It was also taken for granted by everybody, it seemed to me, that Katsimbalis not only had a right to improvise as he went along but that he was expected to do so. He was regarded as a virtuoso, a virtuoso who played only his own compositions and had therefore the right to alter them as he pleased.

There is another interesting aspect of his remarkable gift, one which again bears analogy to the musician's talent. During the time I knew him, Katsimbalis' life was relatively quiet and unadventurous. But the most trivial incident, if it happened to Katsimbalis, had a way of blossoming into a great event. It might be nothing more than that he had picked a flower by the roadside on his way home. But when he had done with the story that flower, humble thought it might be, would become the most wonderful flower that ever a man had picked. That flower would remain in the memory of the listener as the flower which Katsimbalis had picked; it would become unique, not because there was anything in the least extraordinary about it, but because Katsimbalis had immortalized it by noticing it, because he had put into that flower all that he thought and felt about flowers, which is like saying—a universe.

I choose this image at random, but how appropriate and accurate it is! When I think of Katsimbalis bending over to pick a flower from the bare soil of Attica, the whole Greek world, past, present and future, rises before me. I see again the soft, low mounds in which the illustrious dead were hidden away; I see the violet light in which the stiff scrub, the worn rocks, the huge boulders of the dry river beds gleam like mica; I see the miniature islands floating above the surface of the sea, ringed with dazzling white bands; I see the eagles swooping out from the dizzy crags of inaccessible mountain tops, their somber shadows slowly staining the bright carpet of earth below; I see solitary men trailing their flocks over the naked spine of the hills and the fleece of their beasts all golden fuzz as in the days of legend; I see the women gathered at the wells amidst the olive groves, their dress, their manners, their talk no different now than in Biblical times; I see the grand patriarchal figure of the priest, the perfect blend of male and female, his countenance serene, frank, full of peace and dignity; I see the geometrical pattern of nature expounded by the earth itself in a silence which is deafening. The Greek earth opens before me like the Book of Revelation. I never knew that the earth contained so much; I had walked blindfolded, with faltering, hesitant steps; I was proud and arrogant, content to live the false, restricted life of the city man. The light of Greece opened my eyes, penetrated my pores, expanded my whole being. I came home to the world, having found the true center and the real meaning of revolution. No warring conflicts between the nations of the earth can disturb this equilibrium. Greece herself has become embroiled, as we ourselves are now becoming embroiled, but I refuse categorically to become anything less than the citizen of the world which I silently declared myself to be when I stood in Agamemnon's tomb. From that day forth my life was dedicated to the recovery of the divinity of man. Peace to all men, I say, and life more abundant!

HENRY MILLER

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